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THE
STORY OF WATERLOO;
OR,
THE FALL OF NAPOLEON.

"The desolater desolate,
The victor overthrown."—*Byron*.

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BYRON ON WATERLOO.

June 18. 1815.



And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war ;
And the deep thunder, peal on peal afar ;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe ! they come !
they come !"

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose !
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes :—
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With that fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears !

And Ardeaves waves above them her green leaves,
 Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieve,
 Over the unreturning brave,—alas !
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
 Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living valour, rolling on the foe
 And burning with high hope shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
 Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
 The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
 The morn the marshalling in arms—the day
 Battle's magnificently stern array !
 The thunder clouds close o'er it, which when rent
 The earth is covered thick with other clay,
 Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
 Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent !

.
 The Psalmist numbered out the years of man :
 They are enough ; and if that tale be *true*,
 Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span,
 More than enough, thou fatal WATERLOO !
 Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
 Their children's lips shall echo them, and say—
 “ Here, where the sword united nations drew,
 Our countrymen were warring on that day ! ”
 And this is much, and all which will not pass away.

BYRON, *Childe Harold*, c. iii. st. 25, 26, 27, 28, and 35.



CHAPTER I.

NAPOLEON'S RETURN FROM ELBA.

Thou isle,
Which seest Etruria from thy ramparts smile,
Thou momentary shelter of his pride,
Till wooed by Danger, his yet weeping bride !
Oh France, retaken by a single march,
Whose path was through one long triumphal arch !

BYRON, *The Age of Bronze.*



THE island of Elba lies off the coast of Tuscany, from which it is separated by the Strait of Piombino, a channel nowhere exceeding five miles in breadth. Its greatest length is about eighteen miles, and its breadth varies from three to ten miles. This irregularity arises from the bold sweeps and indentations of both its northern and southern shores. Its surface is broken up by a chain of mountains, which, running from east to west, divides into two spurs at the eastern extremity of the island; the loftiest summit

attaining an elevation, in Monte della Cassana, of 3600 feet above the sea level. The crest of this wild and romantic range is almost everywhere naked and barren; but on its declivities, and in the low sheltered valleys, the vine, the olive, and the mulberry flourish exceedingly. The climate is temperate and healthy. There are numerous springs, though the streams are few. The mineral wealth of the island is great: marble, alum, vitriol, and loadstone are plentiful; and a mountain in the eastern district, two miles in circumference, and several hundred feet in height, is one huge mass of iron ore, and of ore so rich that it gives from 50 to 75 per cent. of metal. Nor is Elba without its pastoral and agricultural treasures; sheep, goats, pigs, and asses abound; and it produces white, red, and sweet wines of excellent quality; wheat, Indian corn, vegetables, and water-melons. The population of the island is about 21,000; of the capital town, Port Ferrajo, about 3000.

Thither, on the conquest of France by the Allied Powers in 1814, and the occupation of Paris, was Napoleon Bonaparte banished, with a sufficient income to provide for all his wants, the title of Emperor, a few of his most faithful followers, and a small military force. The island

was allotted to him for life as a secure and tranquil residence; and, it was supposed by the allied sovereigns, as a place from which it would be impossible for him to make any fresh attempts to disturb the peace of Europe. It was assuredly a change from Paris and all its splendours, from France and all its glory, from that magnificent empire which he had lost through his treachery, his greed, and his insatiable ambition. Standing upon one of its hills, he could behold at once the entire extent of his sea-washed realm. "Ah, it must be confessed," he exclaimed, "that my island is somewhat small!"

He took possession of his new sovereignty in May 1814. With characteristic energy he at once addressed himself to the task of developing its resources. He ordered new roads to be constructed; repaired and restored public buildings; opened up fresh mines and quarries; encouraged the insular potteries; promoted commerce; and fostered among his subjects a spirit of enterprise. But a mind which had been occupied with the control of the affairs of Europe, soon grew weary of these petty occupations. He soon learned from his emissaries that the Bourbon ruler who had been restored to the throne of France had no real hold on the affections of the nation, and

that the army, which he had so often led to victory, longed for their Emperor's return. Forgetful of his engagements with the Allied sovereigns, and chafing at the inaction to which his fiery spirit was condemned, he resolved to make one bold and daring stroke for the crown he had lost. He carefully drilled his small but trusty band of veteran soldiers. He despatched his agents to France to stimulate the hopes and encourage the loyalty of his adherents; and on the morning of the 26th of February 1815, he embarked with his guards, on board some small vessels, and successfully eluding the British cruisers, he stood once more upon the soil of France, at three o'clock in the afternoon of the memorable first of March. His little army bivouacked that evening on some open ground that lay outside the town of Cannes on the east. An effort was made to seduce the garrison at Antibes, but the commander of the fortress proved loyal to Louis XVIII., arrested the soldiers who had been employed on this mission, and threatened to fire upon any who should repeat the attempt. Cambronne, one of the generals who accompanied Napoleon, repaired to Cannes, and demanded of its magistrate six thousand rations for the troops. The demand was reluctantly complied with, for

the ex-Emperor's presence incensed the people, who were weary of wars, conscriptions, and revolutions. Some said that if he came into the town they would shoot him. At four o'clock on the morning of the 2d of March, the troops, in number about 800, with Napoleon at their head, attended by his old companions in arms, Bertrand, Drouet, and Cambronne, commenced their hazardous march upon Paris.

This landing in the Gulf of St Juan on the 1st of March, was the prologue to one of the most exciting historical dramas ever acted, the "Hundred Days,"—a period counting from the 13th of March, when Napoleon re-assumed the government of France, to the 22d of June, when he finally abdicated.

The ex-Emperor's departure from Elba was not known to the sovereigns of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, and to the representatives of the other European powers assembled in congress at Vienna, until the 7th of March, when the Duke of Wellington received a despatch from Lord Burghersh, the British ambassador at Florence, communicating the unwelcome and unexpected tidings. It was some days later before the landing at Cannes and the march upon Paris were known at Vienna. And such, in those

days, was the slowness of communication, that, on the 5th of March it was not known in Paris that Napoleon had abandoned the island-realm all too narrow for his genius and his ambition.

It cannot be said that the administration of Louis XVIII., after his restoration to the throne, was characterised by prudence or sagacity. It seemed the great object of the king and his ministers to treat the twenty years of the Republic and the Empire as something which had never been. They appeared to think it possible for a nation to forget a period of its annals which, if marked by some disasters, had also been crowned by the most splendid successes,—to forget a ruler who, if ambitious, and reckless of the lives of his subjects, and arbitrary in his home government, had nevertheless raised France to the supremacy of Europe, and carried the tricolor in triumph from the Tiber to the Elba, and the Tagus to the Moskwa.

“The Parisians,” says Mr Knight, in his admirable history, “laughed at the littleness which set the upholsterers to work in defacing the N. (Napoleon’s initial), which was multiplied on the carpets and hangings of the Tuilleries; but they were angry when the white flag took the place of the tricolor. The anger of the

bourgeoisie was perhaps of little consequence. The discontent of the idle pleasure-seeking Parisians would not have brought back Napoleon, had not offence been given to a much more united and powerful body. The army felt more acutely than the people the suppression of the tricolor. The men hid their old cockades in their knapsacks; the officers, when the cockades and the standards were required to be given up, concealed the eagles, or burnt the standards which they had followed to victory. Thousands of old soldiers were pouring into France, abased as prisoners of war, or turned out from the fortresses of provinces once annexed to the empire. The distinctive numbers of the regiments were entirely changed, so that the peculiar glory and heroism of each regiment were lost in the renown of the general mass. The army was reduced with imprudent haste; officers of the regiments retained by the restored government were put upon half-pay, and their places were supplied by young men who had seen no service, or by ancient gentlemen whose only merit was to have emigrated. Numerous invalids (or pensioned soldiers) were turned out from their refuge in Paris to exhibit their wounds and proclaim their wrongs in the provinces. The

power which had so long dominated over France was not judiciously reduced; its vanity was outraged by unnecessary affronts. The head of that wondrous military organisation which had so long kept Europe in terror, was his own master, in an island within two days' sail of the shores of France, unwatched and uncared for, as if he had utterly gone out of the minds of his idolators. The symbols of his authority had disappeared from the palaces and public buildings of France; but a symbol was invented to indicate that with the return of spring the hero would come back to chase the Bourbons from their throne, and to repair the disasters of the last year of the empire." This symbol was the violet, which the Bonapartists wore openly in their coats, and whose colour the Bonapartist ladies adopted in their attire. Little pictures of bouquets of violets were sold in the shops, in which the flowers were so arranged as to trace the classic outline of a well-known face. *Pere la Violette* was the name by which the hero was now recognised, and before the violets blossomed in wood and dale, this sign had passed from soldier to soldier. As they looked around them with military haughtiness, and talked mysteriously in spite of the royalist agents, men began to

suspect that a crisis was coming, and that the Bonaparte bee might once more replace the Bourbon fleur-de-lis on the imperial robes, and the chairs of sovereignty.

I have dwelt upon these circumstances because they will account for the wonderful success of Napoleon's rapid march upon Paris, and at the same time, for his disastrous fall after Waterloo. The army was with him, but the country was not. The Parisians were sullen and discontented, but though they despised the Bourbons, they hated the Emperor and the statesmen of France. Her robust minds, her aristocracy, and her commercial classes, kept aloof from one who used his genius to perpetuate a despotism, and sought to hide his crimes against liberty under the veil of military glory.

Napoleon marched from Cannes to Grenoble, through the scantily populated mountainous regions of Dauphiné, without encountering any serious resistance. He had opened up communications with the gallant and imprudent Labedoyère, who was an officer of the garrison at Grenoble, and he found the young colonel and his men prepared and anxious to hoist the tricolor. General Marchand, the governor of Grenoble, refused, however, to break the oath

of allegiance he had sworn to Louis XVIII., and sent out a detachment to observe the force that was approaching. Napoleon, when he saw the troops advancing, went out to meet them, unattended, and opening wide his well-known grey coat, exclaimed, "I am your Emperor; fire upon me if you will!" The soldiers, at the sight and voice of the hero who had led them to victory on a hundred fields, were overpowered, flung themselves on their knees, drew from their knapsacks their treasured tricolor-cockades, eagerly mounted them, and with loud shouts joined his ranks. Labedoyère and his men soon swelled the increasing army, and Napoleon entered Grenoble amidst the cheers of the soldiers and the clang of martial music. On the 12th of March he reached Lyons. From this, the capital of southern France, and the ancient seat of the Revolution, he issued his imperial edicts as if already in possession of the supreme authority. He declared the chambers of peers and deputies dissolved; banished the returned *émigrés*; abolished all titles of honour, except those granted for services rendered to the nation; and struck off the list of the army the emigrant officers who had received commissions from the Bourbon government. All opposition

to his advance was useless. The army everywhere flung aside the white cockade, and resumed the tricolor. Marshal Ney, "the bravest of the brave," who, on the 7th of March, had taken leave of King Louis with the assurance that he would bring back Bonaparte in an iron cage, on the 14th of March issued a proclamation to the army at Auxerre, which began thus significantly :—"Citizens and soldiers! The cause of the Bourbons is irrecoverably lost; the legitimate dynasty which the French nation has adopted, will never more mount the throne." On the 19th of March, Louis, by proclamation, dissolved the chambers. On the same day, after midnight, he drove out of Paris by the road to St Denis, only a few hours before Napoleon, on the 20th, drove in by the Barrier of Italy; and on the 23d he arrived safely at Ghent. Napoleon, on the 21st, slept in the historic palace of the Tuilleries, having been borne up the grand staircase by an enthusiastic crowd, and welcomed in the old familiar *salons* by the ladies of his former court, who, with characteristic French sentimentality, showered upon him fragrant bouquets of violets. The wives and daughters of his marshals and guards had been neglected, or openly insulted, by the proud aristocracy who

had flocked to the levees and assemblies of the restored monarch. The ladies of the Imperial court now had their revenge.

On the surface, indeed, all seemed smooth and bright, and to the uninstructed eye it seemed as if Napoleon, after a brief interval of rest, had once more resumed his despotic power. But such was not the case. He was Emperor, but not ruler. He was at the head of an army, but not of a people. The column, to all appearance, was firm, massive, and lofty, but there was hollowness at the base, and the foundation on which it rested was insecure.*

* "The Emperor had appeared once more," says Mr Hooper, "but when he entered Paris, he ceased to be Emperor. He had to compound and to temporise. Those writers alone take a correct view of the supreme crisis in the career of Napoleon, who insist that his only chance of success against combined Europe, was to be found in an appeal to the revolutionary spirit, in an emphatic declaration that the country was in danger, and in rousing a whole people to arms. But these very writers forget that the wars of the empire had exhausted the spirit as well as the body of the Revolution, and that no matter how imperiously the Emperor might have stamped his foot upon the soil of France, all his stamping could not have called forth the race of men whom he had consumed in his gigantic wars"—*Waterloo*, p. 27.



CHAPTER II.

NAPOLEON'S PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

Some barbarous dream of Empire to fulfil,
Those iron ages he would have restored,
When Law was but the ruffian-soldier's will :
Might governed all, the sceptre was the sword ;
And Peace, not elsewhere finding where to dwell,
Sought a sad refuge in the convent-cell.

SOUTHEY—*The Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo.*



NAPOLEON had no sooner seated himself upon the throne, than he addressed all his energies to the task of re-organizing the whole military strength of the French Empire. He knew that the Allied Powers would never suffer him to retain the imperial crown without a struggle ; that England regarded him as the disturber of Europe ; that Russia, Prussia, Austria, had each their special wrongs to avenge. He knew that Russia had not forgotten Borodino ; that Austria still mourned over Austerlitz ; and that

Prussia remembered Jena with an implacable hatred. He knew that attempts at negotiation were useless: he had broken so many treaties, that all Europe had learned to distrust him. The overtures he put forward through his chosen diplomatists were, indeed, received with contemptuous indifference; and, on the 13th of March, a few days after the news of his landing near Cannes had reached them, the ministers of England, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Sweden, Spain, and Portugal, affixed their signatures to a manifesto which declared Napoleon Bonaparte an outlaw. And we may here add, that a treaty was afterwards concluded, by which the seven Powers bound themselves to enforce that decree, and to carry on the war until Napoleon should be driven from the throne of France, and rendered incapable of again disturbing the peace and order of Europe.

Napoleon, therefore, found himself confronted by armed Europe. He had no friend—not a single ally. He recognised the greatness of the peril, but he bated not one jot of heart or hope. “I desire peace,” he said to Benjamin Constant, “but I can obtain it only by means of victories. I do not wish to give you false hopes; I allow it to be said that negotiations are in progress.

Nothing of the kind! I foresee a difficult struggle, a long war." In his anticipations he was only partly correct: the struggle was difficult, but not long.

His first measure, in which he was not very successful, was to secure the hearty support of the legislature, by professing himself desirous to reign constitutionally. "The repose of a constitutional king," he was fond of saying, "will suit me; and will suit my son better." But the French statesmen replied that this admission of constitutional government was of very recent origin; and wisely doubted whether so imperious a spirit, and so arbitrary a genius, would ever submit to any restraint or limitation. They suspected, and rightly, that he espoused constitutional doctrines, not because he loved them or believed in them, but that he might obtain present support, and gain time to establish imperialism on a foundation of successful war.

His next step was to strengthen and recruit his army. Knowing that at the period of his return from Elba the best troops of England were in America, that the Germans had but a comparatively small force on the Rhine, that the Russian hosts were in Poland, he calculated that the Allies would be unable to open the

campaign until the middle of July; and, for a moment, he hoped, by appealing to the sympathies of his father-in-law, the Emperor of Austria, and by stimulating the jealousy of the Russian Czar against his allies, if not to reduce his enemies to two, England and Prussia, at least to protract the commencement of hostilities until the autumn. By that time he hoped to have eight hundred thousand men under arms.

His calculations were erroneous on two points: he underrated the energy and determination of the Allies, and he overrated the military resources of France. He forgot that he had drained the country of its best blood; had taught it to loathe war; had almost sickened it of glory; and that he could no longer fill his ranks by the conscription,*—for his long series of costly campaigns had exhausted the youth and manhood of the nation.

All that he could do he did; and if he did no more it was from want of materials, not from any decline in the ardour and energy of his genius. In less than three months he reinforced and improved the artillery; he augmented and renovated the cavalry; he once more called

* The proper conscription for 1815 had been levied in the autumn of 1813.

into existence that imperial guard of veterans which had decided the fate of so many battles. He found ready to his hand, when he re-ascended the throne, a force of 223,972 men of all arms—officers included—giving a disposable effective of 155,000 men ready to take the field. By the 13th of June, his almost incredible exertions raised this force, including officers, to a total of 276,982 men ; that is, 247,609 of the line, and 29,373 of the Imperial Guards. The number available for war was 198,130 ; and it follows, therefore, that Napoleon had increased the general effective by 53,010 men, and that part of it disposable for war by 43,130. He also directed and completed the fortification and armament of the north side of Paris ; supplied the first line of frontier fortresses with provisions for six months, and the fortresses of the other lines in proportion ; threw up entrenched works round several provisional towns, and fortified the defiles of the Jura, the Vosges, and the Argonne ; he succeeded in obtaining horses absolutely required for the cavalry and artillery, and supplied the latter with harness for nearly 600 guns ; he more than doubled the number of effective muskets. In addition to this, he totally re-organized the army, revived (as we have

campaign until the middle of the year. At a moment, he hoped, by his army provided for the sympathies of his father-in-law, he would be able to draw the line from two to Austria, and by stimulating employment to the Russian Czar against his enemies to two, he would contented under the least to protract the campaign, taken away; he added until the autumn. For a regiment of cavalry: eight hundred thousand of two hundred battalions

His calculations. In short, by unceasing he underrated the whole military details of the Allies, and in so far as it was possible, sources of France that he ordered was done. No drained the affected more, few men so much, taught it means in the same time.

it of glory on the 30th of April, had issued his rank, invoking the Electoral College for series of Deputies to the Chamber of youthatives. The majority of the people from voting. The Emperor felt that

At necessary he should do something striking, something adapted to impress the imagination of France; and, for this purpose, he sought himself of reviving the old revolutionary fete of the Champs de Mars. It did not place in May, however, but in June. Napoleon, attired in his Imperial robes, appeared on a lofty platform erected in the Champs de

...s, attended by a glittering procession of
...sters, statesmen, courtiers, prelates, officers,
...d surrounded by two hundred thousand soldiers
and citizens. In a spirited harangue, he announced that the wishes of the nation having restored him to the throne, his whole thoughts were directed to the foundation of the liberty of the people, on a constitution resting on their wishes, and bound up with their interests. And he concluded with an animated appeal to the honour and pride of France. The powers who resist all popular rights, he said, are determined on war. For war we must prepare!

On the 11th of June, having nominated a Provisional Government to act in concert with the Chambers, he left Paris in the evening. "I go to measure myself with Wellington," he exclaimed, as he stepped into his carriage. Before we follow him to the scene of war, we must glance at the nature of the preparations made by the Allies to ensure the defeat of their formidable antagonist.



CHAPTER III

PREPARATIONS OF THE ALLIES.

—The arms are fair,
When the interest of bearing them is just.
—*Shakspeare.*

—War is honourable
In those who do their native rights maintain ;
In those whose swords an iron barrier are
Between the lawless spoiler and the weak ;
But is, in those who draw th' offensive blade
For added power or gain, sordid and despicable
As meanest office of the worldly churl.

—*Joanna Baillie.*



WE have said that a treaty was signed on the 25th of March, whereby the Allied Powers bound themselves to make war against Napoleon, the common enemy of Europe, and pledged themselves not to lay down their arms until he should have been rendered absolutely unable to create disturbance, or to renew his attempts for possessing himself of supreme power in France.

This treaty was signed by the Duke of Wellington on behalf of England, and his action was unanimously approved by the British Government, and, on the whole, by the Parliament and the country. There was, indeed, a small knot of ultra-liberals who professed themselves that Napoleon should have another trial; that is, should have been allowed time to augment the resources of France, until he might once more be in a position to dictate laws to Europe! But even these men admitted that his professions of moderation were not to be trusted! Their argument was, that if England acknowledged him as the ruler of France, the French constitutionalists, without whose aid, they said, it was impossible for him to carry on the government, would be in a position to extort from him adequate securities, and so to dominate in his councils as to prevent him from ever resuming his schemes of aggrandisement. The only excuse that can be made for such a plea is, that those who put it forward did not understand the character of the man, or the people he ruled. It was as impossible for Napoleon to have governed constitutionally as for France to be satisfied with a military king who rested in "inglorious peace." The condition by which he won power was the

sole condition by which he could keep it ; that is, ministering to the French army's boundless lust of glory and plunder ! Moreover, it is to be remembered that, for the maintenance of peace upon the bases adopted in 1814 at Paris and Vienna, the European Powers had no guarantee but the worthless promises of a man whose exclusion from the French throne was the primary article of the treaty of Paris. France, by receiving back Napoleon, had violated that treaty, and insulted Europe. The possibility that a new-born constitutional party could strive with any success against the Emperor and his soldiers, was much too vague and unsubstantial to serve as a foundation for a European peace. In the hour of uncertainty and disaster the constitutional party was strong ; but it was felt that with the first gleam of military success, the first indication that Napoleon had resumed his career of victory, it would sink into utter nothingness. Therefore, it was better at once to resort to the arbitrament of war, and to impose upon France such conditions that she should not be able, at all events for a considerable period, to disturb again the tranquility of Europe.

Having come to this conclusion, England and her Allies made ready to support it energetically.

At the period of Napoleon's return from Elba, the common enemy of every European nation was on a peace footing. On the frontiers of France, however, between the Meuse and the Moselle, some 26,000 Prussians were in cantonments under the command of General Kleist, and about 40,000 English, Hanoverians, and Dutch-Belgians, under the Prince of Orange, were distributed through Belgium.

On the 4th of April, when the Duke of Wellington reached Brussels, and took the command of the British, Hanoverian, and Dutch-Belgian armies, he found that he had at his disposal, exclusive of garrisons, only 25,000 Anglo-German troops, of which 5000 were cavalry; and 10,000 Dutch-Belgians, of whom 2000 were cavalry. The quality of the latter were very inferior, for they were mostly young recruits; and the same might justly be said of the British troops, the flower of our army being in America. The Duke intimated to his Government that he required 40,000 British infantry and German legionaries, exclusive of garrison troops, 18,000 cavalry, and 150 British field-guns; but, at first, the chances did not seem great that his demands would be complied with. However, his energy was inexhaustible, and he used his influ-

ence at home so effectually that, by the 3d of May, he found himself at the head of 70,000 men fit for service in the field. In the meantime, the 26,000 Prussians had grown into 80,000. Blucher, the Prussian generalissimo, popularly known, in allusion to his headlong courage, as old "Marshal Forwards," had also arrived, and met the Duke on the 2d of May at Tirlemont. On the 21st of May, Wellington informed Prince Schwartzberg, the Austrian commander, that, without counting the troops in the various garrisons, he could place in the field 60,000 bayonets, and nearly 16,000 sabres, and that, of the latter, 10,000 were equal to any in the world.

Reinforcements continued to pour in ; and, by the middle of June, the total force under the command of the Duke, from all sources, had been augmented to 105,950 men, and 196 guns ; while the army under Prince Blucher had increased to nearly 120,000 men, with upwards of 300 guns. Such, at least, are the figures given by Captain Siborne, a deservedly accredited authority.

But of what material were these great armies composed ? The kernel, or, rather, the heart of Wellington's force was the British battalions, squadrons, and batteries, taken in conjunction

with the regiments and batteries of the King's German Legion. Most of the regiments had at some period served in the Peninsula, but nearly one-half was composed of second battalions, and a large portion were half-trained recruits, who had volunteered from the militia, when the regular battalions were hurriedly filled up to their proper complement for foreign service. But the supply of old soldiers was not inconsiderable; and of the young it might fairly be said, that whatever their imperfections of discipline, they possessed all the old British pluck, tenacity, and physical prowess. Some of the regiments, indeed, did such honour to the English flag, that even the cold and unimpassioned Wellington, when speaking of them, was warmed into enthusiasm. He was especially moved to admiration by his cavalry. Not only were they magnificently mounted, but they were admirably trained. "Some had to 'fight for a name;' and some had to keep a name; and all were animated by the true military spirit."

The artillery, though not numerous, was splendidly effective, both horse and foot; and by substituting 9-pounder for 6-pounder guns in the horse batteries, Colonel Frazer had rendered them better able to meet their oppo-

nents. The foot batteries were not inferior even to Wellington's Peninsula infantry in steadfastness and "staying power;" and the horse batteries in dash and rapidity equalled the brigades of cavalry to which they were attached. Praise not less warm might fairly be bestowed on the German Legionaries, who, from long association, and race-qualities, had thoroughly acquired the spirit and method of their old allies.

Of the rest of Wellington's army, if we except the older Hanoverian battalions, little good could be said. As Mr Hooper points out, the Dutch-Belgian soldiers, who had been hastily raised, and were poorly officered, had not reached that steadiness of discipline which would have made them safe soldiers. The greater part of the foot were militia; and the horse, newly raised like the rest, were inexperienced, and did not possess that confidence in themselves and their leaders so essential to all soldiers who engaged the French in fight. It should be remembered, too, that the ranks of the whole Dutch-Belgian army contained numbers of officers and soldiers who had served under Napoleon. Many were inspired by the truest courage and patriotism; but the courage and patriotism of the majority were weakened by their superstitious

belief in Napoleon's invincibility. The Brunswick troops were young and untried, but breathed a spirit of reckless gallantry. The Nassauers were also young, and not particularly good either in body or spirit ; but they were mostly experienced soldiers.

This mixed army, says Mr Hooper, so unequal in its elements, so abruptly brought together, had not at the opening of the campaign acquired that consistency and mutual confidence so essential to successful operations in war. The soldiers and officers spoke four or five languages and many dialects. The special merits of the British soldiers were unknown to many of their Continental comrades. Wellington had been a victorious general, but the renown he had derived from his campaigns in the Peninsula was as nothing in their eyes compared with that of Napoleon, or the best of Napoleon's marshals. Yet, it may safely be said that Wellington alone held together the incongruous body which had been assembled in the rich plains of Belgium.

The Prussian army was compact, homogeneous, and composed of trained and veteran soldiers, who were animated by the fiercest hatred of Napoleon and the French. They were devoted to their leader, whose burning valour and bril-

liant military qualities fully justified their devotion. As early as 1806, Blücher, then a prisoner of war at Hamburg, had predicted the fall of Napoleon, and he had remained constant in this belief throughout the astonishingly successful career of the French Emperor. And his faith, like that of Wellington, who had always expressed the same confidence, was still more earnest and resolved in 1815 than it had been at an earlier period—for it had been justified by the glorious events of 1814.





CHAPTER IV.

OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN.

The cannons have their bowels full of wrath ;
And ready mounted are they to spit forth
Their iron indignation.

—*Shakspeare.*



HAVING thus seen the strength and character of the forces assembled on either side, it now becomes necessary for us to ascertain their disposition, and to examine the movements by which they approached each other for the purpose of deciding the future destiny of Europe on the field of battle.

The object of Wellington and Blucher was twofold : they had to guard an extensive and open frontier ; and they had to hold themselves in readiness to move towards any point which their great enemy might select for delivering his first blow.

Wellington, therefore, divided his troops into two *corps d'armes* and a reserve—the former commanded respectively by the Prince of Orange and Lord Hill, the last by himself. The first corps included the English and German divisions under Cooke and Alten, and the greater part of the Dutch-Belgians under Chassè, Papoucher, and Colbaert ; the second comprehended Colville's and Clinton's divisions, and a division and a-half of Dutch-Belgians under Prince Frederick of Orange. The reserve was composed of Picton's and Cole's divisions—the Nassauers and Brunswickers. The guns were partially distributed through the divisions. The cavalry was placed under the orders of the Earl of Uxbridge, a dashing and capable soldier ; and the British squadrons were kept together in cantonments. Three tried and trusty regiments of British infantry were detached to give solidity to the garrisons of the maritime fortresses. And, with the remainder of his army, Wellington lay across the road to Brussels and Antwerp, and protected his line of communications with England.

His front was, therefore, very extensive. Commencing from the right, at Ostend, the line followed the frontier—Nieuport, Ypres, Courtray, Tournai, and Mons—these strong fortified cities,

which had figured so conspicuously in the War of the Succession, had been so strengthened as to render them embarrassing to any force attempting to break into Belgium between the Scheldt and the Lys, or between the Scheldt and the Sambre, and, at the same time, to utilize them in covering the movement of troops in their rear. Wherever it was practicable, the sluices had been opened, and the country inundated. Behind these fortified cities, and between them and Antwerp and Ghent, lay Wellington's army. From Courtray to Mons, a chain of cavalry outposts watched the movements of the enemy. The great mass of the troops were cantoned in the open plains between the Scheldt and the great road from Charleroi through Brussels to Antwerp. Lord Hill's head-quarters were at Ath, on the Dender, and the brigades of his corps extended on the right as far as the Lys, and on the left in the direction of Mons. The first corps formed the left of the army; the head-quarters were at Brain le Comte; and the divisions extended along either side of the highway from Mons to Brussels. The extreme post on the right was at Binche, and on the left at Frasne. In the rear of Lord Hill was accumulated the flashing squadrons of the cavalry—huzzar, lancer, and

dragoon—their tents dappling the green slopes of the Dender Valley—their head-quarters being at Grammont; and in the rear of the Prince of Orange was stationed the reserve, in and about Brussels, with one brigade of Cole's division at Ghent. Thus, on the right, between Dender and the Scheldt, were posted nearly 30,000 men, and nearly as many on the left, between the Dender and the Brussels and Charleroi road; about 8000 horsemen in and about Grammont and Ninove, a central position; and the 25,000 men of the reserve near Brussels. Hence, two-thirds of the army were really east of the Dender, upon the great roads leading from Valenciennes and Maubeuge upon Brussels, and on the flank of the road through Charleroi to the Belgian capital.

The Prussian army was posted to the left of the Anglo-Belgian, and so much to the left that the point of concentration of the most distant corps was Liège, on the Meuse. It was divided into four corps, and a complete army in itself—being composed of four brigades of infantry, with a due proportion of horse and guns. Corps No. 1, under General von Ziethen, stood on the right; the 2d, under General Pirch, in the right centre; the 3d, under General von

Thielmann, on the left centre, thrown forward over the Meuse; and the 4th, under Count Bulow, on the left. The point of concentration for the fourth corps was Liége, and its brigades were posted chiefly on the north and west of head-quarters. The third corps occupied the country between the Meuse and the Ourte, having its head-quarters at Ciney, midway between the two rivers, and one brigade at Huy, on the Meuse. The outposts were extended southwards towards the frontier as far as Rochefort and Dinant.

The head-quarters of the second corps was at Namur; its brigades lying along the road from that place towards Louvain, but one brigade was at Huy. The outposts were stationed on the left bank of the Meuse, the most advanced being at Sossoye, communicating on its left with Thielmann, and on its right with Ziethen.

Finally, the head-quarters of the first corps were at Charleroi, and its battalions occupied the line of the Sambre from Thain on the right bank to Moustier sur Sambre on the left. The cavalry and reserve were stationed in Sombref and Gembloux. The outposts tracked the course of the Sambre from Lobbes and Thain to Charleroi, and thence extended through Gerpinnes

across the angle formed by the Sambre and Meuse towards Sossøye. Thus, the Prussian right overlapped the British left; and here, owing to the disposition of the two armies, was the weak point of their army; the bulk of the Prussians lying away to the left, and the bulk of the Anglo-Belgians to the right, a faulty arrangement, but forced upon Wellington and Blücher by the long extent of position they had to cover, and by the necessity of protecting their communications.

Napoleon's forces, or the *Grande Armée*, as he called it, consisting of about 200,000 infantry, cavalry, and artillery, were thus disposed of:—To guard his northern frontier, he kept there four corps, and a mass of cavalry, between the Meuse and the Lys; one corps was stationed on the Moselle, and the Imperial Guards, for the time, at Paris. The larger part of the remainder of the disposable effective of regular troops, together with 38,000 picked National Guards, in all 90,000 men, were divided into six small bodies, of which two, the 5th and 7th, were styled *corps d'armée*, and four were called corps of observation. According to Mr Hooper, whose clear and accurate narrative we shall closely

follow in this chapter, they were scattered between Strasbourg and Antibes in the following manner :—

The 5th corps—19,000 regular and 3000 National Guards—under Count Rapp, held the famous line of the Lauter, the scene of some of Marlborough's finest military manœuvres, between Hagenau and Landau, with its headquarters at Strasbourg.

When he sent Rapp to take the command of the Upper Rhine, Napoleon promised him 40,000 troops of the line; but, at the opening of the campaign, he had not half that number under arms: a very inadequate force to keep in check the masses swarming in Baden and Wurtemberg, and in the provinces on the left bank of the great German river.

On the left of Rapp, but at a considerable distance, General le Courbe, with a force of 4446 regulars and 10,000 National Guards, watched Basle, and the passes of the Jura range; while a weak division of National Guards did their best to maintain the communication with Rapp.

On the right of Le Courbe, Marshal Suchet, with the 7th Corps, a mixed force like the others, 8814 regulars and 12,000 National Guards, occupied Chambrey and Grenoble. His corps

was styled the Army of the Alps; but its contingent of National Guards was something like Falstaff's "ragged regiment:" men of inferior physique, half-armed, barely equipped, and poorly clad.

A still weaker body, not numbering above 4081 men, under Marshal Brune, was distributed between Toulon and the Var.

On the Spanish frontier, Decaen was at Toulouse, in front of the Eastern, and Clauzel at Bordeaux, watching the Western Pyrenees; the aggregate of their troops, National Guards included, did not exceed 14,000 men.

The forces at the disposal of the Emperor were further reduced by 8500 troops of the line, and 6000 National Guards, who, under General Lamarque, contended with internal enemies; for the Royalists had risen in the west, and they occupied the attention of Lamarque until the end of June, in the old battle-grounds of La Vendée.

Behind all these troops were the depots, but these were nearly drained of men; and in the fortresses were distributed some 150,000 National Guards, sailors, and local troops.

When Napoleon found that the Allies held firmly together, and were rapidly accumulating

such immense armies, that they would be able in a few months to pour into France an irresistible flood of bayonets and cannon, he resolved immediately to assume the offensive, in the hope that he might encounter his enemies one by one, and beat them in detail. With an eagle eye he detected the weak point of the long array of Wellington and Blucher, and it was at this he determined to strike with all his might. Summoning to his aid all the resources of his genius, he concentrated, with unequalled skill and rapidity, an army of nearly 130,000 men, between the Sambre and the Meuse. It consisted of the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 6th *corps d'armee*, commanded respectively by D'Erlon, Reille, Vandamme, Gérard, and Lobau; of the Imperial Guards; and of four corps of reserve cavalry.

Early in June, the corps of D'Erlon, Reille, and Vandamme were stationed in cantonments on the northern frontier, between Lille on the Scheldt, and Mezières on the Meuse—both being fortified towns of great strength, the connecting links being Rocroi, Avesnes, Maubeuge, and Valenciennes. All the frontier-roads were closely watched, and every precaution was taken to prevent Wellington and Blucher from learning

the movements of the Imperial troops. Behind these three corps stood Lobau at Laon, where Marshal Soult, temporarily in command of the whole, had his head-quarters. The four cavalry corps, under Pajol, Excelmans, Kellerman, and Milhaud, about to be placed under the orders of Marshal Grouchy, were distributed between Laon and Avesnes. The artillery was at La Fère, on the river Serre; and in the rear of the whole lay the Imperial Guard at Compiègne. Gérard's corps, somewhat pretentiously called the Army of the Moselle, watched the banks of that river, so famous in legend and song, from Metz to Thionville. But when Napoleon resolved to break in upon the centre of the Allied lines, he recalled Gérard to the Army of the North.

The concentration of these forces is admitted to have been one of Napoleon's most remarkable displays of military genius. As it was his object to take the Allies by surprise, it was needful he should strike suddenly; and that he should divert their attention, if possible, from the real object of his attack. He, therefore, ordered the garrisons along the whole line, from the Moselle to the North Sea, to mask the march of the several corps, while he arranged that, on the frontier, between Dunkirk and Maubeuge, at

the moment when the troops in cantonments marched for the point of concentration the advanced post should be tripled, so that the enemy, deceived as to the Emperor's real object, might suppose that the whole French army was gathering towards its left. The British cavalry outposts did not fail to observe their movements; but they afforded no sufficient indication of the enemy's intentions, and though they may have made Wellington cautious, they did not influence him so far as to induce him to change the station of a single battalion.

Gérard, who, as will be seen from a glance at the maps, had the greatest distance to traverse, was the first to move. He took his departure from Metz on the 6th of June, and regulated his march so as to reach Phillipeville on the 13th. On the 8th, the Imperial Guards left Compiègne, taking the direction of Beaumont. Next, Vandamme worked to his left, and Reille and D'Erlon to their right, while the cavalry gradually drew towards the front. For some days, streams of infantry, and horsemen, and guns, poured into the flat country between the Sambre and the Meuse; and the well-conceived orders of their chief were so well executed by eager officers and enthusiastic soldiers, that, to Napoleon's infinite

gratification, the whole army was concentrated on the morning of the 14th.

Napoleon reached Avesnes on the 13th, and, the same evening, he issued his final instructions to his lieutenants. He had now so disposed his troops that they lay close to the position, though not actually upon it. On the extreme left lay the 1st and 2d corps—Reille at Lens, and D'Erlon behind him at Sombre sur Sambre. These were ordered to march on the morning of the 15th, the first following the second, so as mutually to support each other. Vandamme's corps, the 3d, and Lobau's, the 6th, were stationed three miles in front of Beaumont; two miles in the rear lay the veteran infantry of the Imperial Guard—one regiment excepted—which was in the town: while the cavalry were posted behind them. Towards the right, the four corps of reserve cavalry were posted on the right front of Beaumont, and between that town and Walcourt; and still further to the right, Gérard's corps lay in front of Phillippeville. All received orders to strike their tents on the morning of the 15th; the greater part at three o'clock, but the Guards and the 6th corps a little later.

Thus, then, this imposing force presented, as Mr Hooper points out, a concave front—the

left being thrown as far forward as the point where the old frontier line of France crossed the Sambre. The bulk of the Imperial army was concentrated around Beaumont, and pointed directly upon Charleroi, Grouchy's cavalry connecting the solid centre with the lighter right wing at Phillipeville. All the generals had received strict orders to keep secret the intentions of their chief ; to prevent any person from crossing the frontier ; and to conceal the fires of their bivouacs from the enemy. In the last-named object, however, their precautions proved ineffectual. Though the fires were kindled in the valleys, and on the inner slopes of the hills, the keen eyes of the Prussian general, Ziethen, who was on the watch both night and day, detected the presence of the French army by the reflection of their concealed fires on the blue sky of the night—and he did not fail to profit by the timely warning.

The army thus brought together with so much skill and surprising accuracy, consisted of—

20 divisions of infantry ;

14 divisions of cavalry ;

31 batteries of foot artillery ; and

16 batteries of horse artillery :—

making a total of 128,088 men—that is, 89,415

infantry, 22,300 cavalry, and 15,871 artillery, with 344 guns.* “Perhaps,” it is said, “the finest and most complete army ever commanded by Napoleon: an army which believed in him and in victory with a force and devotion never surpassed.”

On the 14th of June, Napoleon issued the following address to his army, spirited and eloquent like all his bulletins—and, like all his bulletins, crowded with misrepresentations:—

ORDER OF THE DAY.

NAPOLEON, by the Grace of God, and the Constitution of the Empire, Emperor of the French, &c., to the Grand Army.

*At the Imperial Head-Quarters,
Avesnes, June 14, 1815.*

Soldiers! this day is the anniversary of Marengo and of Friedland, which twice decided the destiny of Europe. Then—as after Austerlitz, as after Wagram—we were too generous! We believed in the protestations and in the oaths of princes, whom we left on their thrones. Now, however, leagued together, they assail the

* These are the figures given by Colonel Charras.

independence and the most sacred rights of France. They have commenced the most unjust of aggressions. Let us, then, march to meet them: are they and we no longer the same men?

Soldiers! at Jena, against these same Prussians, now so arrogant, you were one to three; and at Montmirail one to six.

Let those among you who have been captives among the English describe the nature of their prison-ships, and the frightful miseries they endured.

The Saxons, the Belgians, the Hanoverians, the soldiers of the Confederation of the Rhine, lament that they are compelled to use their arms in the cause of princes—the enemies of justice and of the rights of all nations. They know that this coalition is insatiable! After having devoured twelve millions of Poles, twelve millions of Italians, one million of Saxons, and six millions of Belgians, it now wishes to devour the states of the second rank in Germany.

Madmen! one moment of prosperity has bewildered them! The oppression and humiliation of the French people is beyond their power. If they enter France they will find their graves.

Soldiers! we have forced marches to make,
D

battles to fight, dangers to encounter ; but, with firmness victory will be ours. The rights, the honour, and the happiness of the country will be regained.

To every Frenchman who has courage, the moment has now arrived to conquer or to die !

(Signed) NAPOLEON.





CHAPTER V.

MOVEMENTS OF THE ALLIES.

Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs—
Piercing the night's dull ear ; and from the tents,
The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.

—*Shakspeare.*

THE British commander had placed his head-quarters at Brussels. Thither came all reports, and thence all orders issued. He was of opinion that his great antagonist would move upon the Scheldt, or between the Scheldt and the Lys, or from Maubeuge upon Mons. But he was not unprepared for an attack by the Sambre and the Meuse, and was able to meet the blow which Napoleon delivered in that direction.

It was not until three o'clock in the afternoon of the 15th that he received any certain information of the French movements, and learned that

Charleroi was threatened. He then issued orders for the various divisions of his army to assemble, and pushed forward Alten, Chassi, and Perponcher to Nevilles; Cooke to Enghien; Clinton to Ath; Colville to Grammont; the cavalry to Ninhove; while the reserve, which lay around Brussels, was ordered to be ready to march at daybreak on the 16th. Having thus got his troops well in hand, he went, as every body knows, to a ball given by the Duchess of Richmond, where he appeared as cool, immovable, and unconcerned as if he had not to measure himself, in a few hours, with the greatest commander of the age.

On the morning of the 16th, Napoleon, acting upon the data his generals had collected, determined to attack the Prussians in full force, in the hope of annihilating them before the British could come to their support. But it is to be observed that he was by no means accurately informed as to the true position or strength of the Prussians; and that, on the 16th, as on the 18th, he displayed an extraordinary amount of hesitation and indecision, so that some writers have not scrupled to affirm that, either from physical or mental causes, he was not wholly master of himself.

He now divided his army into two wings and a reserve. The left wing consisted of the first and second corps, Gérard's division excepted; of Kellerman's heavy cavalry, and of the light cavalry of the Imperial Guard; a force, if united, numbering 33,520 infantry, 8800 cavalry, and 96 guns. Marshal Ney was in command of this wing.

The right wing included the third, fourth, and sixth corps, together with three of Grouchy's cavalry divisions; that is, of 42,869 infantry, 15,023 cavalry, and 144 guns. It was under the command of Marshal Grouchy.

The reserve, under Napoleon himself, consisted of the Imperial Guard; 13,206 infantry, 1718 horse, and 96 guns.

After much waste of precious time, Napoleon ordered Ney to press forward and occupy Quatre Bras, Genappe, and Marbuis, with the view of seizing Brussels on the morning of the 17th; while Grouchy was directed to march upon Sombref.

But Grouchy knew, what his Imperial master did not know, that the Prussian army was posted in great strength at and about Sombref, and all he could do was to advance as far as Fleurus, where he was joined by Napoleon and the Imperial Guard about an hour after noon.

Here, to his surprise, he found Blucher ready to meet him, and boldly lying right across his path. "He mounted the steps of a windmill near the town, and surveyed the scene before him, still reluctant to believe even his own senses. He despatched several officers to the front, and he rode himself at a leisurely pace, attended by a small staff, along the whole line of vedettes which covered the front of his divisions. More than one hour was spent in satisfying himself of the reality of the spectacle before him, and in forming a conception of the position occupied by the enemy." But even now, owing to the nature of the ground, he formed an incorrect opinion of the disposition of the Prussian forces, and persisted in believing that only a body of troops was before him, and not the Prussian army. He therefore ordered Ney to attack vigorously whatever was before him, and then to move towards himself, so as to put the Prussian force between two fires.

During the interval which elapsed between Napoleon's arrival at Fleurus, and his decision to attack the Prussians, the Duke of Wellington had ridden across the country from Quatre Bras to hold a council with Blucher. Sir Henry, afterwards Lord, Hardinge had been directed

by the Prussian generalissimo to proceed to Quatre Bras, and obtain some assistance from the British. "I set out," he says, "but I had not proceeded far when I saw a party of horse coming towards me, and, observing that they had short tails, I knew at once that they were English, and soon distinguished the Duke. He was on his way to the Prussian head-quarters, thinking they might want some assistance; and he instantly gave directions for a supply of cavalry. 'How are they forming?' he inquired. 'In column, not in line,' I replied; 'the Prussian soldier, Blucher says, will not stand in line.' 'Then the artillery will play upon them, and they will be beaten damnably,' was the comment of the Duke."

Continuing his course, Wellington came up with Blucher near the mill of Bussy. Then, while the French Emperor was examining the Prussian position, and making arrangements to act upon its right, the Allied Commanders were discussing a similar plan of operations for the defeat of the French. They resolved that Blucher should accept battle; and that Wellington, with all possible speed, should move up from Quatre Bras troops designed to act upon the left flank of the Imperial army.

“ At this moment, there is reason to believe, Wellington calculated, and on good grounds, that more than one half of his army could be in line at Quatre Bras by three o'clock. But this is not the significant fact which should be commended to the reader's notice. That fact is, that Napoleon had failed at the outset to separate the two armies, for they were then in close and solid communication ; the two Commanders-in-Chief, though he knew it not, were conferring together on the hills overlooking his position ; and we are justified in asserting that the foundation of the coming victory at Waterloo was laid in the memorable interview between Wellington and Blucher at the Mill of Bussy.”

Wellington was not “ surprised ” by Napoleon, as some authorities have seen fit to assert ; nor did he fight the battle of Waterloo without a perfect knowledge of the resources on which he had to depend. It was in full reliance, as we shall see, on their concerted plan of operations that Blucher met the French at Ligny, and Wellington awaited the shock of battle at Waterloo. The Allied Generals thoroughly understood each other, and thoroughly understood their troops ; and victory was no more possible for Napoleon at the beginning of the

brief campaign than it was at the end. He committed the fatal mistake of undervaluing his adversaries. It is true enough that in his disposition on the 16th and 18th, the French Emperor was guilty of errors which in his palmier days he would never have committed; but it may be held as certain that had his genius been as fiery and unhesitating as at Austerlitz or Wagram, he must still have been beaten. He had no army which could defeat the British, much less an army which could defeat both British and Prussians.





CHAPTER VI.

QUATRE BRAS—JUNE 16TH 1815.

Men in armour clad,
Upon their prancing steeds disdainfully,
With wanton paces trampling on the ground :
. Footmen threatening shot,
Shaking their swords, their spears, and iron bills,
Environing their standard round, that stood
As bristle-pointed as a thorny wood.

—*Christopher Marlowe.*



AFTER a difficult and fatiguing march of twenty miles, through a country destitute of water, and in sultry weather, the British troops, in obedience to Wellington's instructions, reached Quatre Bras at two o'clock in the morning of the 16th of June.

Quatre Bras is a small and irregularly-built village, situated, as its name indicates, at the junction of four roads, and sheltered on the right by a thick and extensive wood. Of this wood the French, at the time of Wellington's

arrival, had gained possession, having compelled the Prince of Orange's inferior force to retire.

Wellington's first operation was to recover the important post of le Bois de Bossu, and, with this view, he ordered the 95th Regiment to attack the tirailleurs who held it. The order was obeyed, and, after a sharp contest, the French withdrew. The Royals and the 28th were then moved forward on the left, and the 44th and Highland regiments on the right. Ney immediately ordered his men to attack them, and both parties rushed to the encounter animated by the old traditional spirit of national rivalry. The British steadiness prevailed, and the French were rolled back upon their supports in terrible disorder.

Meanwhile, the French general, Foy, fell upon the troops of the Duke of Brunswick, who occupied the centre. Up to this moment, he had gallantly sustained a heavy cannonade, to which, from want of artillery, he could make no reply. Coolly smoking a pipe, he rode up and down in the front of his line, like a paladin of old, undismayed by the storm of shot which rained around him. Foy came down in column along the skirt of the wood, with a cloud of cavalry on his right flank, and a swarm of light troops protecting

his front. Without a moment's delay, and rejoicing in the prospect of the coming battle, the Duke of Brunswick advanced at the head of his Lancers; but Foy's veterans, trained on many a hard-fought field, received them with an unfaltering murderous fire, and the young soldiers, appalled, lost heart, turned round their horses' heads, and galloped away. On came the French cavalry, glittering in steel; and the Brunswick infantry, shrinking from the deadly shock, followed the bad example of their cavalry, retiring slowly at first, but as the horsemen came upon them, more and more rapidly, until they broke up in complete disorder—some seeking shelter in the wood, and others making for Quatre Bras. Their heroic prince vainly endeavoured to keep them together in masses; and, while engaged in rallying the fugitives, received a mortal wound. The Brunswick hussars, worthier of their chief, plunged right into the French column; but, after a hand-to-hand combat, were overpowered by numbers, and forced to retire.

Having gained possession of this part of the field, the victorious French cavalry wheeled to the right, and made a gallant charge at the British van. The 42d Highlanders were not

quick enough in forming square, and Ney's Lancers cut into their very midst. The flank companies as they fell in were mowed down to the ground, but the French were unable to break the square. The stout Scotchmen refused to move, and furiously attacking those who had ridden in among them, killed them with ball or steel, unless they yielded themselves prisoners. The affray was fierce and glorious.

Again and again these heavy charges were delivered by the French horsemen against the British infantry, and again and again they proved unsuccessful. It is true that a regiment or two, taken by surprise, were much disordered, and suffered severely; but the general resistance opposed to the French was as successful as it was spirited. An incessant rolling fire brought cuirassiers and lancers to the ground; and, in spite of their furious onslaughts, and of the terrible cannonade by which they were supported, the British stood unshaken, and as the dead and dying fell out, calmly closed up their ranks, and kept unbroken their line of flashing steel. "One regiment," says Mr Maxwell, "after sustaining a furious cannonade, was suddenly, and on three different sides, assailed by cavalry. Two faces of the squares were

charged by lancers, while the cuirassiers galloped down upon another. It was a trying moment. There was a dead-like silence; and one voice alone, clear and calm, was heard. It was their colonel's, who called upon them to be 'Steady.' On came the enemy!—the earth shook beneath the horsemen's feet; while on every side of the devoted band, the corn bending beneath the rush of cavalry disclosed their numerous assailants. The lance-blades nearly met the bayonets of the kneeling front rank—the cuirassiers were within a few paces—yet not a trigger was drawn. But when the word 'Fire!' thundered from the colonel's lips, each side poured out its deadly volley; and, in a moment, the leading files of the French lay before the square, as if hurled by a thunderbolt to the earth. The assailants, broken and dispersed, galloped off for shelter to the tall rye, while a constant stream of musketry from the British square carried death into the retreating squadrons." The 42d and the 92d, however, were terribly cut up; and the battle remained undecided until the English Guards came upon the field, at half-past six, enabling Wellington to recover le Bois de Bossu, and drive the French out of the farm of Germincourt, which they had occupied in the early part of the day.

Ney made one brilliant effort for victory, directing Kellerman's cavalry at the Guards, who, in their impetuous career, had left the protection of the wood. But the Guards comprehended their danger, and as, owing to the rapid advance of the horsemen, they had no time to form square, they spontaneously faced about and ran into a ditch which marked the boundary of the wood; forming a line therein, and opening up a heavy and well-directed fire, which soon cleared many a saddle, and drove back the enemy discomfited. The French general then knew that he was beaten, and fell back in front of Frasne. Night fell upon the hard-fought field in the possession of the British; and Wellington had succeeded in maintaining his communications with Blucher, who, on the same day, had been disastrously engaged, as we shall see, with the French right and centre, under Napoleon, and been compelled to retire upon Wavre.

At *Quatre Bras* both armies sustained heavy losses. The Allies, inferior in cavalry and artillery, and attacked in detail, lost 4659 men in killed, wounded, and missing—of whom 2480 were English. The fury of the battle was chiefly borne by the brigades under Generals Pack

and Kempt, and out of 5063 men who went into action, 1569 were put *hors de combat*. 878 men were lost by the three Highland regiments alone; 554 by the Guards.

The loss of the French is estimated at 4375 men—a larger loss in proportion to their strength than that sustained by the Allies; Ney losing about 1 in 4, and Wellington 1 in 7 of the force actually brought into action.*

* There is much confusion in the statements of different authorities as to the strength of the armies, and their respective losses, in the Waterloo campaign. We have generally adopted the figures given by Siborne and Charras.





CHAPTER VII.

LIGNY—JUNE 16TH 1815.

Manfully

They stood, and everywhere with gallant front
Opposed in fair array the shock of war.
Desperately they fought, like men expert in arms,
And knowing that no safety could be found,
Save from their own right hands. . . .

The evening darkened, but the avenging sword
Turned not away its edge till night had closed
Upon the field of blood.

—*Southey.*



WHILE Wellington and the British were engaged in repulsing Ney at Quatre Bras, Blucher and the Prussians were called upon to oppose the onset of Napoleon himself at Ligny.

Blucher, as soon as he became aware of the advance of the Imperial forces—who moved forward from Fleurus in the direction of St Amand and Ligny—occupied these villages with strong detachments, crenellated the stone cottages and

garden walls for musketry, planted cannon on every commanding ground, and lined the hedges and the orchards with his best marksmen. The brunt of the French attack fell in the first place upon St Amand, and it was so resolute and so impetuous, that the Prussians, though they fought well, were driven out of it. Fresh troops came up to their support, and a part of the village was recovered; but the French also received reinforcements, and, once more driving out their opponents, they deliberately pushed forward until they reached the foot of the hill between Ligny and Wagnelie, where they were arrested by the tremendous fire of the Prussian artillery. The sole advantage they had gained by their brilliant charge was, so far, the possession of the two villages of St Amand and Le Humeau, beyond which, however, they seemed wholly unable to advance.

Meantime, a desperate effort had been made by the French centre to capture the important post of Ligny. Gérard, who commanded in this part of the field, formed his troops into three columns, and with music and loud shouts, they marched onwards to their death. No sooner did they come within musket range, than the Prussians, most of whom were under shelter, poured

in a deadly fire: a fire so deadly, indeed, that it brought the French to a momentary pause. Recovering themselves, however, they resumed their advance, and, bounding up to the hedges and walls, with fire and shot, endeavoured to break through.

Nevertheless, the sturdy Prussians held their own along the whole front, and these gallant soldiers were forced to retire. Again they rushed to the charge, and again recoiled before the murderous fire of their enemy. By this time, the shells poured into Ligny by the French artillery had set on fire the thatched roofs of the stone cottages, and columns of lurid flame rose above the lurid smoke-clouds of the battle.

As if inspired by the appalling spectacle, the French troops came on for the fourth time. "The dark columns, raised to fury by three defeats, and reinforced by fresh battalions, whose restrained ardour now broke all bounds, dashed into the position of the defenders, passed on with wild cries, and, in spite of the splendid fighting of the Prussians, gained ground, and, once setting them in motion, pursued them through the enclosures and orchards, swept them out of nearly the whole of the village on the right bank, and followed them across the brook.

A brilliant onset it was; but the Prussians speedily poured three fresh battalions into the village, and this compact mass coming on with great vigour, struck and forced the most daring of the French over the rivulet, and into the very outermost houses of the village. Yet no farther. Recovering from the confusion caused by the Prussians' vehement counterstroke, the French rallied, and a combat of the deadliest kind began in this confined space. None demanded, none gave, quarter. Each slew the enemy where and how he could. It was a *melee* of gladiators doomed to conquer or die. The bayonet, the butt of the musket, the bullet, by turns inflicted death or mortal wounds. There were no survivors but the victors. And over this horrible struggle the flames played and raged, and the burning timbers of many a roof-tree fell upon antagonists who, insensible to this peril, were absorbed by one passion—a desire to kill. It is a tragedy which reminds one of the last combat of the *Niebelungen* in the hall of King *Elzil*."

At half-past five, after three hours' desperate fighting, the position of the battle was as follows :—The Prussians had lost St Amand on their right; on their left they had been driven back by Grouchy; in the centre, Prussians and

French were fiercely contending for the possession of Ligny, the key of the battle-field.

Napoleon, recognising this fact, and seeing, too, that the centre was the weakest portion of the Prussian line, determined to deliver against it a formidable blow, with the hope of cutting through it, and separating Blucher's army into two unequal and isolated sections. For this purpose he brought up his Guards and cavalry—a mass of 18,000 foot, 4800 horse, and 100 guns; and, as the sun went down, and darkness began to gather over the dreadful scene, he sent them against the Prussian centre. Ney moved forward with an impetuosity which could not be denied, drove back their stubborn enemy literally at the point of the bayonet, and captured Ligny. The battle was won. Blucher, in person, led a desperate cavalry charge in the hope of re-taking the village, but it was useless. His horse was shot, and, in falling, rolled upon his veteran rider, who narrowly escaped being made prisoner. The Prussian infantry retreated unwillingly, but surely, pressed by the overwhelming masses hurled against them. Though defeated, however, they were not routed. They retired in good order, and mustered about one o'clock at Tilly and Gentinnes on the road to Wavre.

Napoleon's victory, therefore, was comparatively worthless. He had not succeeded, though he supposed he had, in separating Blucher from Wellington, and he had no chance of beating the two armies in detail. With a loss of 11,000 men, however, he had inflicted on the Allies a loss of 25,000 men, and, by driving Blucher out of Ligny, he compelled Wellington on the following day to fall back from Quatre Bras, in order that his communications might not be endangered. This was not one of those dazzling successes which had illustrated his earlier career, when a single victory had crushed an army and determined the fate of a kingdom. This was no Jena or Austerlitz. But, then, he had encountered troops of very different mettle from those he had defeated at Jena and Austerlitz; and he himself was not the man he had been on those memorable days of battle.

Before we proceed to describe the great and crowning fight of Waterloo, it is necessary to explain that, on the 17th, the Prussians fell leisurely back upon Wavre, where Blucher rallied nearly 90,000 men and 260 guns, and wrote to the British commander that, on the following day, he would join him with his whole army;

and, added he, "if the enemy does not attack you on the 18th, we will attack him together on the 19th." Wellington assembled his forces around and about Mont St Jean, in the neighbourhood of Waterloo. No attempt was made to impede his movements; and, early in the evening, arms were piled; guns packed; the cavalry picketed their horses; and fires speedily blazed along the whole extent of the Allied lines.

Napoleon, utterly ignorant of the real position of affairs, despatched Marshal Grouchy with only 32,000 men and 96 guns, to prevent the junction of the Prussians with the British! Then, with the remainder of his forces, he slowly advanced as far as Planchenoit and the village of La Belle Alliance.





CHAPTER VIII.

WATERLOO—JUNE 18TH, 1815.

Sure that the progeny of this fair isle
Hath power as lofty actions to achieve,
As were performed in man's heroic prime.

— *Wordsworth.*

THE ever-memorable field of Waterloo has been described as a valley, or hollow, of irregular width, bounded north and south by winding chains of low grassy hills, which extend for some two or three miles in length, and subside gently, but with frequent undulations, towards the basin in the centre. In the rear of the northern ridge, and about midway, stands the village of Mont St Jean; in a similar position behind the southern ridge is situated that of La Belle Alliance. Through both these villages, and, consequently, crossing the valley almost at right angles, runs the broad paved highroad from Charleroi, which,

under the green boughs and through the dense leafy masses of the Forest of Soignies, strikes onwards to Brussels. Almost on the margin of this same forest lies the little hamlet of Waterloo.

On the morning of the 18th of June, the Anglo-Belgian army was stationed along the northern ridge of hills; its extreme right protected by a village and ravine called Merke Braine; and its left by the small hamlets of La Haye and Papelotte; communication with the Prussians being maintained by the Ohain road. Moreover, on the right, at the foot of the hills, were situated the château, gardens, and wood of Goumont, or Hougoumont, extending fully half-a-mile into the plain. Close to the British lines lay an extensive orchard, surrounded by thick tall hedges, with a deep ditch running outside the whole of the northern boundary. To the west of this orchard stood the garden, the château, and its appurtenances, a substantial mass of buildings, enclosed on all sides. "A farm gate opened on the north into an avenue which led to the Nivelles road; a larger and more substantial gate on the northern side, the main entrance, opened on an avenue which traversed the wood, and lost itself in the fields.

Attached to the château was a large pleasure-garden, enclosed by a brick wall about eight feet high, the eastern side passing into the orchard, and the southern the wood; but between the wood and the southern wall, and separated from it by a belt of the orchard, ran a very thick hedge formed of large trees and tall bushes. This hedge extended as far eastward as the outmost limits of the enclosure. South of this post rose the wood, a dense mass of large trees, closely packed together. This wood, about three hundred and fifty yards in length, and two hundred and fifty in breadth, screened the château from view, and rendered it impossible for an enemy to make a correct estimate of the strength of the post. On the eastern side of the wood were two enclosed fields; on the western, a field and kitchen-garden bordered the whole of that side. Here, again, the large trees growing closely together in the hedges formed a natural pallisade. It was a field fortress covered on two sides by a living screen. Such was Hougoumont."

The British commander thought it possible that an enemy so skilful and audacious as Napoleon might make a bold effort to turn his right, and march direct upon Brussels. He,

therefore, stationed a corps of observation of 18,000 men at Hal, under Prince Frederick of the Netherlands ; and it is important to remember that this corps did not come under fire at all on the 18th. The splendid regiments of the Guards, under General Coote, were formed into two brigades, Maitland's and Byng's, and distributed on the rising ground near Hougoumont, into which important post they threw several companies as a garrison. The centre of the Allied line was occupied by Baron Alten's division, behind the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, which was also held by a considerable body of troops. The Brunswickers were partly arranged in line with the Guards, and partly kept in reserve ; the Nassauers were attached to Alten's division ; infantry and riflemen were posted in the wood of Hougoumont, under the command of the Prince of Orange ; Colville's and Clinton's British division, two Hanoverian brigades, and a Dutch corps, under Lord Hill, were massed *en potence* in front of the right wing.

On the left, between the Charleroi road and La Haye (*not* La Haye Sainte), and lining a lane and thick hedgerow which crossed the summit of the slope, were stationed the gallant Sir

Thomas Picton's division, a brigade under Sir John Lambert, a corps of Hanoverians, and some Netherlands regiments. La Haye and Papillote were garrisoned by a detachment of the Nassau soldiery, under the Prince of Saxe Weimar. As Wellington could not rely on the firmness or loyalty of the Belgians, he took care not to place them together in brigades or divisions, but to distribute them, by regiments, among those corps best known for their solidity.

The second line of the British army was formed of cavalry, under the Earl of Uxbridge, a dashing cavalry soldier, who had distinguished himself in the Peninsula.

The strength of the Anglo Belgian forces, on the 18th of June, may be thus stated :—

Infantry . . .	49,608
Cavalry . . .	12,402
Artillerymen . .	5,645

Of these 24,000 were British; 6000 German Legion; 7500 Hanoverians; and 21,000 Belgians and Nassauers.

In all—67,655 men, with 156 guns.

The British regiments who took part in the action were the following :—

Cavalry—

1st and 2d Life Guards.
Royal Horse Guards (Blues).
1st Dragoon Guards.
1st Royal Dragoons.
2d Royal Dragoons (or Scots Greys).
6th Dragoons (or Inniskillings).
7th and 10th Hussars.
11th, 12th, and 13th Light Dragoons.
15th Hussars.
16th Light Dragoons.
18th Hussars.
23d Light Dragoons.

Infantry—

1st Foot Guards (2d and 3d battalions);
Coldstream Guards (2d battalion); 3d
Foot Guards (2d battalion).
1st Foot, or Royal Scots (3d battalion).
4th Foot (1st battalion).
14th Foot (3d battalion).
23d Foot, or Royal Welsh Fusiliers (1st
battalion).
27th Foot (1st battalion).
28th Foot (1st battalion).
30th Foot (2d battalion).
32d Foot (1st battalion).

33d Foot (1st battalion), the Duke's own regiment.

40th Foot (1st battalion).

42d Highlanders, or the Black Watch (1st battalion).

44th Foot (2d battalion).

51st Light Infantry.

52d Light Infantry (1st battalion).

69th Foot (2d battalion).

71st Light Infantry (1st battalion).

73d Foot (2d battalion).

79th Highlanders (1st battalion).

92d Highlanders (1st battalion).

95th Rifles (2d and 3d battalions).

Royal Artillery.

We now proceed to consider the distribution which Napoleon had made of his Grand Army :—

Drawn up in two lines, it occupied the southern ridge of hills, its centre resting upon La Belle Alliance, and its right protected in the rear by the village of Planchenoit. The first line was composed of the corps commanded by Count D'Erlon on the right, and that of Count Reille on the left, and numbered seven divisions of infantry and two of cavalry. The right wing

of the second line was formed of Milhaud's corps of heavy cavalry; the left wing, of Kellerman's cuirassiers. Thus, each corps of infantry had a corps of cavalry in its rear; and in the centre, the second line was further strengthened by a corps of infantry and two divisions of cavalry, drawn up on either side of La Belle Alliance. The reserves were composed of the famous Imperial Guards, in three bodies—the Old Guard, the Middle Guard, and the Young Guard—with their proper proportions of chasseurs and lancers on the right, and of grenadiers and dragoons on their left.

This masterly arrangement of his force of each arm has been warmly commended by almost every military critic. "It presented to its skilful designer," says Captain Siborne, "the most ample means of sustaining, by an immediate and sufficient support, any attack, from whatever point he might wish to direct it, and of possessing everywhere a respectable force at hand to oppose any attack upon himself, from whatever quarter it might be made. It was no less remarkable for the regularity and precision with which the several masses, constituting thirteen distinct columns, advanced to their destined stations, than for the unusual

degree of warlike pomp and high military bearing with which the lines drew up in their mighty battle-array." As their commander looked upon the splendid battalions he had gathered together, inspired by the recollection of a hundred victories, strong in their confidence in themselves, and in the genius of their great captain, he might be pardoned for believing that no army could successfully resist them. We are told that when, in the grey light of early morning, he reconnoitred the British position, so few troops were visible as to lead him to suppose that Wellington had retreated, and that the rear-guard was about to follow. General Foy, who had served in the Peninsular War, knew better. "Wellington, sire," said he, "never shews his troops; but if he is yonder, I must warn your Majesty that the English infantry in close fighting is the very devil!—*en duel c'est le diable!*" Soult put forward a similar warning; but Napoleon's belief in his star, in his genius, and in his soldiers, remained unshaken; and as he rode along his magnificent army,* he was received with an

* At St Helena, Napoleon, speaking of the appearance of his army, said, *La terre paraissait orgueilleuse de porter tant de braves* (The very earth seemed proud to bear so many brave men).

enthusiastic shout of welcome, which could not but convince him that every soldier there would die in his cause, and for the glory of *la belle France*.

The strength of the Imperial army, on the 18th of June, may be estimated at the following:—

Infantry . . .	48,950
Cavalry . . .	15,765
Artillerymen . .	7,232

In all—71,947 men, with 246 guns.

It will be seen that Napoleon was slightly inferior to the Anglo-Belgians in infantry, but superior in cavalry and artillery.

At the commencement of the battle, which began with a desultory cannonade, the Emperor took up his position on a gentle knoll* behind the farmhouse of La Belle Alliance. “There he remained for a considerable part of the day, dismounted, pacing to and fro with his hands behind him, receiving communications from his aides-de-camp, and issuing orders to his officers. As the battle became more doubtful, he approached nearer the scene of action, and betrayed

* Known as the “Butte” of Rossomme.

increased impatience to his staff by violent gesticulations, and using immense quantities of snuff. At three o'clock he was on horseback in front of La Belle Alliance; and, in the evening, just before he made his last attempt with the Imperial Guard, had reached a hollow close to La Haye Sainte."

Wellington spent the night at his headquarters in the village of Waterloo. After a few hours' sleep he rose, while it was yet dark, and wrote several official letters, after which he dictated the orders necessary to ensure a regular retreat upon Brussels, should the issue of the coming battle prove unfavourable. He then inspected the ammunition reserve, and the arrangements made for the reception of the wounded. Mounting his favourite charger, a small thorough-bred chesnut, named Copenhagen, he rode onward to the Anglo-Belgian position, and carefully surveyed every feature of the ground. When he had satisfied himself that his lieutenants understood his directions, and had ascertained that the spirit of the men was resolute and cheerful, he galloped towards the right of his centre, and, for a time, took up his

position on the rising ground immediately in the rear of La Haye Sainte.

Napoleon's plan of battle was simple—namely, to deliver a simultaneous attack on the British left and centre, with the view of forcing that part of the position, driving Wellington back in disorder on his right, and wresting from him the great road to Antwerp and Brussels. Wellington's plan was still simpler—to hold his ground until Blucher came up; and then, to turn upon the French, and, by force of numbers, completely annihilate them.

The battle began shortly after eleven o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the 18th of June. Captain Diggle, "a cool old officer of the Peninsula, took out his watch, turned to his subaltern officer, Gawler, who was of the same Peninsula mould, and (on hearing the first cannon shot) quietly remarked, 'There it goes!'" The hands of the watch indicated twenty minutes past eleven.

Under the protection of a heavy cannonade, Napoleon ordered a powerful division of the second corps, under Prince Jerome Bonaparte, to attack and carry the post of Hougoumont, whose importance he fully recognised. As they

advanced, the British guns, which, though inferior in number to the French, were admirably served throughout the day, immediately opened fire. The assault upon Hougoumont was made with an impetuosity and a resolution worthy of the renown of the French soldiery; and was repulsed with a steady courage, worthy of the veterans of the Peninsular campaigns. As fast as one man fell, another took his place; and never was a struggle fiercer or more desperate waged on a battle-field. At length the French obtained possession of the wood; but not all their efforts could carry them further. The British Guards, who occupied the château, and had pierced its walls with loopholes for musketry, maintained on every side an incessant and destructive fire. The rattling shot, the whistling shell, the blaze of beam and rafter, for a part of the buildings was in flames, the fierce cheers of the English, the passionate screams of the French, all lent a peculiar horror to the deadly affray that eddied and swelled for hours round about Hougoumont. Napoleon sent regiment after regiment into the wood, and, at times, the château was completely encircled by a dense ring of French troops, but the Guards surrendered not. In the space of some thirty to

forty minutes 1500 men were slain in the adjoining orchard, that is, in an area of less than four acres. At one time the French brought their bayonets right up to the walls, as the men of the Coldstreams retired into the great courtyard. The latter set to work to barricade the gate, but the French drove it open, and poured into the open area beyond. There a desperate hand-to-hand encounter took place, but British endurance and British prowess proved too much for French impetuosity. Nearly every man who entered the courtyard was killed on the spot; and as the few survivors retreated, five of the Guards, whose names well deserve to be recorded—Colonel Macdonnell, Captain Wyndham, Ensigns Gooch and Hervey, and Sergeant Graham—rushed forward, and shut the gate in spite of the desperate exertions of the French, strongly barricading it against further attacks.

Over and through the loopholed walls the gallant defenders now kept up a deadly fire of musketry. It was fiercely answered by the French, who swarmed around the curtilage "like ravening wolves." The shells from their batteries fell fast and furious into the besieged place, one of which set part of the château and some of the out-buildings on fire. Sergeant Graham, who

happened to be standing near Colonel Macdonnell at the wall, and who had displayed an heroic intrepidity and calmness, now asked permission of his commanding officer to retire for a moment. Macdonnell replied, "By all means, Graham, though I wonder you should ask leave now." "And I would not, sir," replied Graham, "only that my brother is wounded, and lies in that out-building yonder, which has just caught fire." Flinging down his musket, Graham hastened to the blazing spot, lifted up his brother, and laid him in a ditch where he was tolerably well protected from the enemy's fire. Then he ran back to his post, and was plying his weapon again before his absence was observed by any except his colonel.

Upon this gallant soldier was afterwards conferred the annuity offered by an English clergyman to the "bravest of the brave."

The attack upon Hougoumont had lasted about two hours, when Napoleon ordered Ney to advance against the British left. The columns moved off in "deep narrow masses," showing a front of about 150 or 200 men, with a depth of from twelve to twenty-four or twenty-seven ranks. Half the left column, flanked by a body of cuirassiers, was despatched against La Haye

Sainte, the other half moving up on the right of the Charleroi road. There was a distance of about four hundred paces between the rear of the leading and the head of the following columns, and an interval of some width, but how much is not known. In this order they marched along, drums beating noisily, and the soldiers screaming out their war-cry. The two flanking posts of La Haye Sainte and Papelotte narrowed the front, and to execute the movement Ney had been compelled to throw the right towards the centre. Another cause soon forced the left also to incline inwards, so that the tendency of the columns was towards the centre of the British left wing. As each column passed beyond the line of the grand battery, the guns, which were for a moment covered by their progress, reopened fire, flinging their shot over the heads of the attacking force. The dark, dense, heavy masses moved slowly over the soft ground, and through the heavy crops, receiving as they passed the battery the fire of the British guns on the crest. It was a striking spectacle, which those who saw would never forget; the sort of parade movement of these columns into the valley, covered by the fire of their numerous artillery. The forces they were to fight were

hardly to be seen, since the hedges along the Wavre road, and the slope in rear, screened them from view. Only the dark forms of the 95th on the left, and the Belgians in the centre, and the light cavalry on the right, were visible. The heroes of Quatre Bras were unseen."

As the columns of the French, in admirable order, ascended the slope towards this position, their tirailleurs opened fire. They then came in contact with the Dutch-Belgians, who speedily showed signs of wavering, and at length took to their heels, and fled in the most shameful manner. But Wellington's second line was here composed of Pack and Kemp's British brigades, under the gallant Picton, who, though sorely wounded at Quatre Bras, had concealed his hurt that he might take his share of the day's fighting. He now brought forward his veterans, some 3000 in number, in a thin two-deep line. The French, halting on the summit of the ridge, attempted to deploy, when Picton shouted to Kemp's brigade, "A volley, my lads, and then charge!" A blaze of musketry rolled along the British ranks, and brought the foremost sections of the French column to the ground. A loud cheer, a ringing British cheer, and with levelled steel Picton's heroes rushed forward to the

charge. As they advanced, their chivalrous leader fell dead, with a bullet through the right temple, crashing into the brain. Woe to the French! The fury of the British was raised to the highest pitch, to that white heat which every enemy of the Anglo-Saxon race has learned to fear, for it burns and consumes everything with which it comes in contact. They threw themselves on the French battalions, and literally bore them headlong down the slippery slope.

With equal success Pack's brigade had rent the other columns; and as the disordered mass of infantry reeled to and fro, unable to withstand the storm of shot and the gleam of steel, right in among them rode the heavy cavalry of Ponsonby's brigade; the splendid English Royals, the magnificent Scots Greys, and the fiery Irish Inniskillings, scattering them on either side, like chaff before a whirlwind, slaying their hundreds, taking prisoners their hundreds, and capturing a couple of the French eagles.*

* One of these was captured by Sergeant Ewart of the Greys, who has left on record a graphic account of his gallant achievement:—"It was in the first charge," he says, "that I took the eagle from the enemy. He and I had a hard contest for it. He thrust for my groin; I parried it off, and cut him through the head, after which

Even this did not satisfy them. They galloped up to Ney's artillerymen, sabred them at their guns, severed the traces, and cut the horses' throats, rendering their guns entirely useless to the French during the remainder of the battle. One would have thought the audacious troopers had made up their minds to engage and conquer the entire French army! Their charge, however, carried them too far, and their very success threw them into disorder. While endeavouring to close up their ranks, Napoleon sent down upon them a heavy force of lancers and cuirassiers, and they were compelled to retreat, suffering considerably. But Vandeleur gallantly brought up his light cavalry to their support, and charging the enemy, drove them back with pitiable slaughter.

Then, as Hooper says, the grand attack on the British left had failed, and Napoleon knew better than to repeat it.

I was attacked by one of their lancers, who threw his lance at me, but missed the mark by my throwing it off with my sword by my right side. Then I cut him from the chin upwards, which went through his teeth. Next I was attacked by a foot soldier, who, after firing at me, charged me with his bayonet, but he very soon lost the combat, for I parried it, and cut him down through the head. So that finished the contest for the eagle."

Meantime, a fierce fight had raged in and around the farm-house of La Haye Sainte. Five hundred German riflemen defended it stoutly against a vastly superior body of French infantry. Shot and shell poured upon them incessantly. The barn broke out into flames, and filled the air with lurid smoke. Wellington could spare no reinforcements. But still the courageous legionaries held their ground. Thrice the French attacked them; thrice they were driven back. At length the Germans found their supply of ammunition failing, and slackened fire. The French made a fourth attempt. "Though the door," says Maxwell, "was burst in, still the Germans held the house with their bayonets; but, having ascended the walls and roof, the French fired on them from above, and, now reduced to a handful, the post was carried. No quarter was given, and the remnant of the brave riflemen was bayoneted on the spot. This was, however, the only point where, during the long and sanguinary conflict, Napoleon succeeded. He became master of a dilapidated dwelling, its roof destroyed by shells, and its walls perforated by a thousand shot-holes; and, when obtained, an incessant torrent of grape and shrapnels from the British artillery on the heights above, rendered its acquisition

useless for future operations, and made his persistence in maintaining it a wanton and unnecessary sacrifice of human life.





CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE BATTLE WAS WON.

The desolater desolate,
The victor overthrown,
The arbiter of others' fate,
A suppliant for his own.
—BYRON, *Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte*.

IN ineffectual attempts upon the Allied right, Napoleon wasted almost all his magnificent heavy cavalry, who rode right up to the compact and solid squares formed by the British infantry, but were unable to make any impressiom upon them, and were compelled to retire, after a brief interval, discomfited and sorely weakened. Charge after charge was repeated, but always with the same result. The cuirassiers fell back before the fire and shot of the British squares, as the waves fall back from the impregnable

rocks. It must be owned, however, that the British suffered severely, and that in this part of the field the battle was very hotly contested. A striking picture of the character of the struggle in all its fierce monotony, occurs in the journal of Major Macready, an officer of the 30th regiment. He and his company had been thrown forward as skirmishers, in conjunction with some grenadiers of the 78d, but were retired to the brigade (Halkett's), at the commencement of the French cavalry's attacks upon their position.

The Major's narrative is so full of incidents that we give it here without abridgment:—

“When I reached Lloyd's abandoned guns, I stood over them for about a minute to contemplate the scene; it was grand beyond description. Hougoumont and its wood sent up a broad flame through the dark masses of smoke that overhung the field; beneath this cloud the French were indistinctly visible. Here a waving mass of long red feathers could be seen; there gleams, as from a sheet of steel, showed that the cuirassiers were moving; four hundred cannon were belching forth fire and death on every side; the roaring and shouting were indistinguishably commixed; together they gave me the idea of a labouring volcano. Bodies of

cavalry and infantry were pouring down on us, and it was time to leave contemplation: so I moved towards our columns, which were standing up in squares. Our regiment and the 73d formed one, and the 83d and 69th another; to our right, beyond them, were the guards; and on our left, the Hanoverians and German legion of our division.

"As I entered the rear face of our square, I had to step over a body; and looking down, recognised Harry Beere, an officer of our grenadiers, who about an hour before shook hands with me, laughing, as I left the columns. I was on the usual terms of military intimacy with poor Harry—that is to say, if either of us had died a natural death, the other would have pitied him as a good fellow, and smiled at his neighbour as he congratulated him on the step; but seeing his manly frame and animated countenance thus suddenly stiff and motionless before me (I know not whence the feeling could originate, for I had just seen my dearest friend drop, almost with indifference), the tears started in my eyes, as I sighed out, 'Poor Harry!' The tear was not dry on my cheek when poor Harry was no longer thought of. In a few minutes after, the enemy's cavalry regalloped up and crowned the crest of our position. Our guns were abandoned, and they formed

between the two brigades, about a hundred paces in our front. Their first charge was magnificent. As soon as they quickened their trot into a gallop, the cuirassiers bent their heads, so that the peaks of their helmets looked like visors, and they seemed cased in armour from the plume to the saddle. Not a shot was fired till they were within thirty yards, when the word was given, and our men fired away at them. The effect was magical. Through the smoke we could see helmets falling; cavaliers starting from their seats with convulsive springs, as they received our balls; horses plunging and rearing in the agonies of fright and pain; and crowds of the soldiery dismounted; part of the squadron in retreat; but the more daring remainder backing their horses to force them on our bayonets. Our fire soon disposed of those gentlemen. The main body reformed in our front, and rapidly and gallantly repeated their attacks. In fact, from this time (about four o'clock) till near six, we had a constant repetition of those brave but unavailing charges. There was no difficulty in repulsing them; but our ammunition decreased alarmingly. At length an artillery waggon galloped up, emptied two or three casks of cartridges into the square, and we were all comfortable. . . .

“Though we constantly thrashed our steel-clad opponents, we found more troublesome customers in the round shot and grape, which all this time played on us with terrible effect, and fully avenged the cuirassiers. Often, as the volleys created openings in our square, would the cavalry dash in; but they were uniformly unsuccessful. A regiment on our right seemed sadly disconcerted, and at one moment was in considerable confusion. Halkett rode out to them, and seizing their colours, waved it over his head, and restored them to something like order, though not before his horse was shot under him. At the height of the unsteadiness we got the order to ‘right face,’ to move to their assistance; some of the men mistook it for ‘right about face,’ and faced accordingly, when old Major M'Laine, 78d, called out, ‘No, my boys, it’s “right face;” you’ll never hear the “right about” as long as a French regiment is in front of you!’ In a few moments he was mortally wounded. A regiment of light dragoons—by their facings either the 16th or 23d—came up to our left, and charged the cuirassiers. We cheered each other as they passed us; they did all they could, but were obliged to retire, after a few minutes at the sabre.

“The enemy’s cavalry were by this time nearly disposed of; and as they had discovered the inability of their charges, they commenced annoying us by a spirited and well-directed carbine fire. While we were employed in this manner, it was impossible to see further than the columns on our right and left; but I imagine most of the army was similarly situated—all the British and Germans were doing their duty. About six o’clock I perceived some artillery trotting up our hill, which I knew by their caps to belong to the Imperial Guard. I had hardly mentioned this to a brother officer when two guns unlimbered within seventy paces of us, and, by their first discharge of grape, blew some men into the centre of the square. They immediately reloaded and kept up a constant and destructive fire. It was noble to see our fellows fill up the gaps after every discharge.

“The ‘*vivida vis animi*’—the glow which fires one upon entering into action—had ceased; it was now to be seen which side had most bottom, and would stand killing longest. The Duke visited us frequently at this momentous period; he was coolness personified. As he crossed the rear face of our square a shell fell amongst our grenadiers, and he checked his horse to see its effect. Some men were blown to pieces by the

explosion, and he merely stirred the rein of his charger, apparently as little concerned at their fate as at his own danger. No leader ever possessed so fully the confidence of his soldiery: wherever he appeared, a murmur of 'Silence—stand to your front—here's the Duke!' was heard through the column, and then all was steady as on a parade. His aides-de-camps, Colonel Gordon and Canning, fell near our square, and the former died within it. As he came near us later in the evening, Halkett rode out to him, and represented our weak state, begging his Grace to afford us a little support. 'It's impossible, Halkett,' said he. And our General replied, 'If so, sir, you may depend on the brigade to a man.'

Many anecdotes are told in illustration of Wellington's cool and collected courage. In the hottest of the fire he rode from square to square, encouraging the men in short and pithy phrases. To one regiment he said, quietly, "Hard pounding this, gentlemen; we will try who can pound the longest." To another, threatened by a cloud of French cavalry, "Stand firm, my lads; what will they say of us in England?"

An Irish regiment expressed its impatience to charge the enemy:—"Wait a little longer," said the Duke, "and you shall have your wish."

One of his staff asked for instructions that, in the event of his Grace being wounded, his successor in command might carry them out,—“My plan,” he answered, “is simply to stand my ground here until the last man!”

About four o'clock, the Prussians, under Blucher and Bulow, having left Thielmann with one division to occupy Marshal Grouchy's attention, began to make their appearance on the hard-contested battle-field. Lobau's infantry, and Dumont's cavalry, were sent to check their advance, and at first succeeded in staying the advanced battalions; but as fresh troops came up, they turned Lobau's left, and made an attempt to capture Planchenoit, so as to intercept the French if they should be forced to retreat. Napoleon immediately sent his Young Guard to hold the village, and a fierce encounter ensued, in which, so bitter was the national hatred, that on neither side was quarter asked or given. Meantime the steady onward movement of the Prussian masses brought them in communication with the British left, while simultaneously threatening the French right.

Napoleon saw that the tide of battle was beginning to ebb, and that unless he could crush Wellington before Blucher effected a complete

junction with the allies, defeat, if not ruin, would be his portion. With the Old Guard, therefore, which he had held in reserve, his hitherto invincible and chosen veterans, he resolved to deliver a final attack upon the shattered ranks of the British. It was half-past seven o'clock when, in two solid columns, and led by the gallant Ney, they advanced to the charge. Napoleon accompanied them for some little distance, then reined up, and halted, while, with enthusiastic shouts of "Vive l'Empéreur !" they filed past him in magnificently stern array. Their course lay between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte, and towards the right of the British centre ; while Donzelot's battalions, then in possession of La Haye Sainte, made a simultaneous attack upon the left.

"This part of the battle," says Sir Edward Creasy, "has drawn less attention than the celebrated attack of the Old Guard ; but it formed the most perilous crisis for the Allied Army ; and if the Young Guard had been there to support Donzelot, instead of being engaged with the Prussians at Planchenoit, the consequences to the Allies in that part of the field must have been most serious. The French tirailleurs, who were posted in clouds in La Haye Sainte, and the sheltered spots near it, picked off the artillerymen of

the English batteries near them, and taking advantage of the disabled state of the English guns, the French brought some field-pieces up to La Haye Sainte, and commenced firing grape from them on the infantry of the Allies, at a distance of not more than a hundred paces. The Allied infantry here consisted of some German brigades, who were formed in square, as it was believed that Donzelot had some cavalry behind La Haye Sainte to charge them with, if they left that order of formation. In this state the Germans remained for some time with heroic fortitude, though the grape-shot was tearing gaps in their ranks, and the side of one square was literally blown away by one tremendous volley which the French gunners poured into it." The Prince of Orange vainly attempted to bring some Nassauers to their support, but the cowards would not advance. Wellington then rallied several battalions of Brunswickers, and led them in person against Donzelot, whose attack was finally repulsed.

To avoid the terrific cannonade with which Napoleon covered the advance of his "forlorn hope," the British soldiers laid down, in a four-deep line, behind the crest of the hill. The British guns then opened, at a distance of not more than fifty yards, upon the serried columns,

mowing down the foremost ranks like grass before the scythe. Ney's horse was killed under him, and he led his soldiers forward upon foot.

The French, at first, could not see their opponents; but when they were close upon the summit of the ridge, Wellington perceiving that the moment had come for assuming the offensive, gave his famous order, "Up Guards, and make ready!" Then, as from the earth, sprang up the household troops of Britain, pouring in upon the astonished French a sure and deadly volley, which killed, it is said, three hundred men; then, levelling their bayonets, they charged the enemy with indescribable fury. Braver men than the Old Guard have seldom gathered on a battle-field, but they could not withstand this amazing onset; they broke, and fled. Ney made an effort to check their flight, but his threats, his exhortations, his encouragements, all passed unheeded. Driven headlong down the slope, the foremost column, broken and disordered, poured upon the rear column, stationed there as a reserve, and threw it also into confusion. The British hussars, under Sir Harry Vivian, galloped into the heart of the disorganized mass, and sabre vied with banet in doing deadly work.

The concluding phases of the battle have been

graphically sketched by Mr Hooper, and we shall avail ourselves of his narrative in concluding our description of the memorable day of Waterloo:—

“The skilful and vigorous attacks made by Vivian with the hussar brigade; the advance of Vandeleur along the eastern enclosure of Hougoumont, and his charges upon Reille’s corps; the unfaltering march of the light infantry brigade (now set in motion by Wellington); the steady progress of the Prussians; and the advance of the whole Allied line from the ridge, completed the work which had been so happily begun. The firmness of Lobau, Pelet, and Duchesme in Planchenoit, alone saved Napoleon from being made prisoner. The Old Guard held that village with a tenacity and a valour beyond praise. The Prussians, unable to force them out of the churchyard by a front attack, were compelled to turn the village on both flanks, and the delay caused by this operation enabled thousands of D’Erlon’s men, pressed by Zeithen and the British left wing, to escape through the gap between Planchenoit and Rossomme. Nevertheless many were cut off. When the remnant of the Old Guard gave way, and the Prussians marched up from the valley to the chaussée, they found the main body of the

French flying in utter disorder along the road and across the fields. The great chaussée was choked up by the fugitives; the very efforts of the Prussians were obstructed by the chaos into which they plunged. The British and the Prussians, converging upon the Charleroi road, between La Belle Alliance and Rossomme, forced all they did not take or slay into the main road. The cannonade had ceased, the last gun fired being a French cannon turned upon the routed enemy. Darkness had settled over the field; the masses, moving through the obscurity, hurled against each other, and more than once friends were mistaken for foes. But in the gloom of that summer evening, lighted only by a rising moon, there was such exultation as men can feel only when, by fortitude and skill, they have snatched a brilliant victory from the very jaws of destruction. As the Prussians came up from the blood-stained village of Planchenoit, their bands played 'God save the King,' and the heroic British infantry in the van answered with true British cheers."

Such was the battle of Waterloo; a battle which overthrew the long unquestioned military supremacy of France, and secured peace to Europe for half a century. It was won by

Wellington's consummate prudence, by the steadfast courage of the British troops, and the loyal assistance of Blucher and his Prussians. It has justly been said that for the British nation and the British army it accomplished much; it consolidated the power of the former, and established the renown of the latter; and when we consider its mighty results, when we consider the importance of the stake, and the brilliant reputation of the players—the hero of fifteen pitched battles and each a victory, the unassuming soldier of duty, loyal to his country and his sovereign, contending with the man who, from a sub-lieutenancy of artillery, had risen by the force of his ambitious genius to an imperial throne, who had humbled every nation in Europe, and planted his standards in Berlin and Vienna, in Rome, Venice, Moscow, and Madrid,—who had been cradled in victory, and nursed in the lap of success,—it is no wonder that the name of Waterloo is still familiar in our ears as a household word, and still treasured up by every true British heart as a heritage of glory, and a legacy of pride.

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A few words will sum up the closing events of the career of Napoleon. On the morning of the 21st of June he re-entered Paris; on the follow-

ing day he abdicated. The Allies entered France, and rapidly marched upon the capital, which instantly capitulated. Louis XVIII. was once more restored, and Napoleon sought safety in flight. Arriving at Rochefort, he found the coast closely watched by the *Bellerophon* man-of-war, to whose captain he surrendered on the 15th of July. On the 24th the *Bellerophon* reached Torbay. After consultation with their allies, the British government resolved to remove the emperor to the island of St Helena. In that rocky prison he spent a few years in undignified contention with the British officials, and at last, on the 5th of May 1821, died of cancer in the stomach.

*Return of the Allied Killed and Wounded in the
Battle of Waterloo, June 18, 1815.*

Killed on the spot, non-commissioned officers and privates,	1715
Died of wounds,	856
Missing, supposed killed,	353
Total,	2924
Wounded,	6831
Total of killed and wounded,	9755

The loss of the French was never accurately known, owing to the absolute disorganization of their army, but it is computed that at least 25,000 fell on the battle-field, and that an equal number must have perished in the flight, or of their wounds, fatigue, and famine.

Return of French Artillery captured at Waterloo.

12-pounder guns,	35
6-pounder do.	57
6-inch howitzers,	13
24-pounder do.,	17

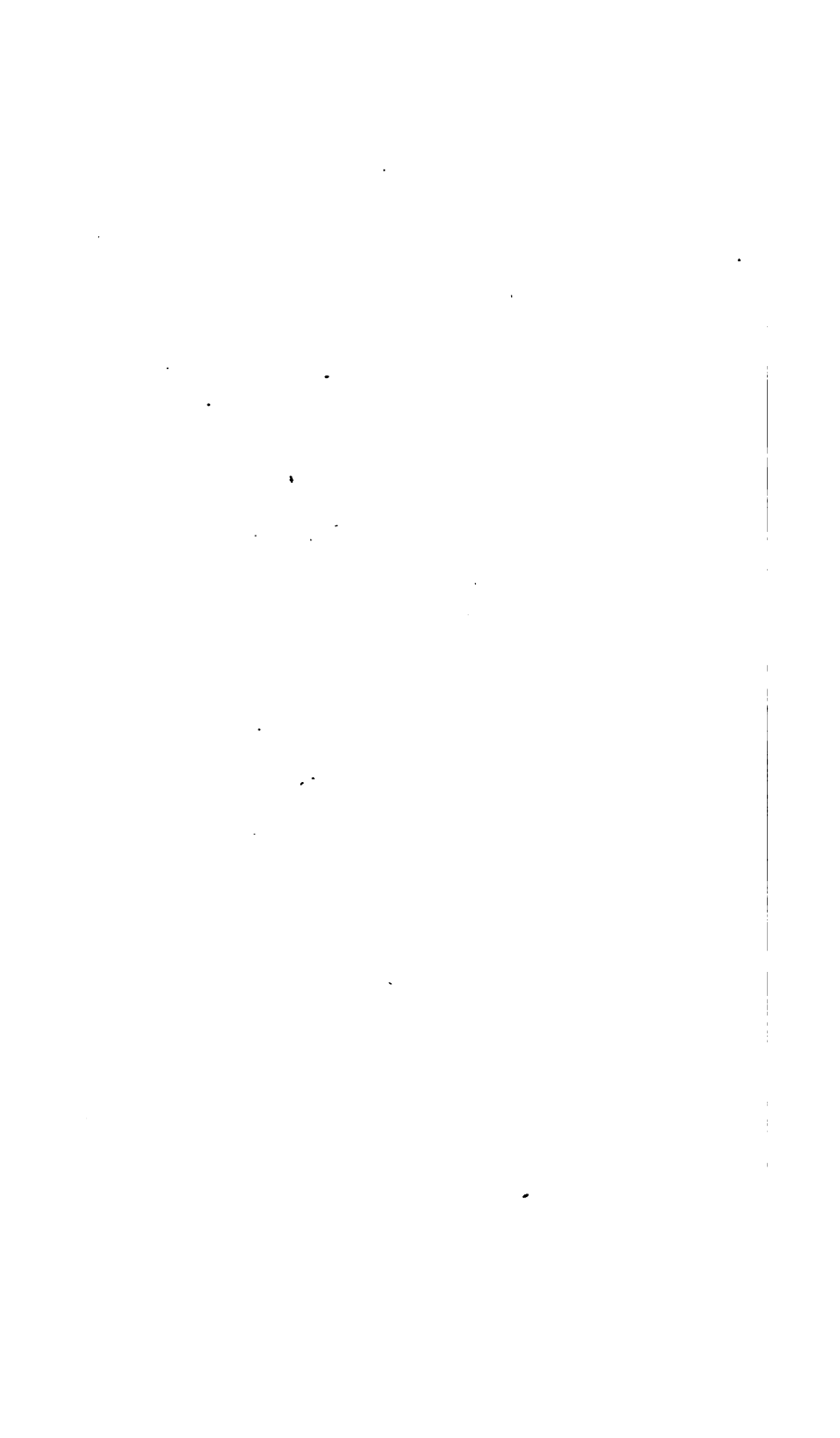
Total, . 122

12-pounder waggons,	74
6-pounder do.,	71
Howitzer do.,	50

Total, . 195

Twenty gun-carriages, twenty forage-waggons, and fifty-two waggons of the Imperial Guard, were also among the spoils.

A SELECTION FROM
THE LETTERS AND DESPATCHES
OF THE
DUKE OF WELLINGTON,
CONCERNING
THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.





Despatch detailing the Battle of Waterloo.

WATERLOO, 19th June 1815.

TO EARL BATHURST.

“Buonaparte having collected the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 6th corps of the French army, and the Imperial Guards, and nearly all the cavalry, on the Sambre, and between that river and the Meuse, between the 10th and 14th of the month, advanced on the 15th and attacked the Prussian posts at Thuin and Lobbes, on the Sambre, at daylight in the morning.

“I did not hear of these events till in the evening of the 15th, and I immediately ordered the troops to prepare to march, and afterwards to march to their left, as soon as I had intelligence from other quarters to prove that the enemy's movement upon Charleroi was the real attack.

“The enemy drove the Prussian posts from the Sambre on that day, and General Ziethen, who commanded the corps which had been at

Charleroi, retired from Fleurus, and Marshal Prince Blücher concentrated the Prussian army upon Sombref, holding the villages in front of his position of St Amand and Ligny.

“The enemy continued his march along the road from Charleroi towards Bruxelles; and on the same evening, the 15th, attacked a brigade of the army of the Netherlands, under the Prince de Weimar, posted at Frasne, and forced it back to the farm house on the same road, called Les Quatre Bras.

“The Prince of Orange immediately reinforced this brigade with another of the same division, under General Perponcher, and, in the morning early, regained part of the ground which had been lost, so as to have the command of the communication leading from Nivelles and Bruxelles with Marshal Blücher’s position.

“In the mean time, I had directed the whole army to march upon Les Quatre Bras; and the 5th division, under Lieut.-General Sir T. Picton, arrived at about half past 2 in the day, followed by the corps of troops under the Duke of Brunswick, and afterwards by the contingent of Nassau.

“At this time the enemy commenced an attack upon Prince Blücher with his whole force, except-

ing the 1st and 2d corps, and a corps of cavalry under General Kellermann, with which he attacked our post at Les Quatre Bras.

“ The Prussian army maintained their position with their usual gallantry and perseverance against a great disparity of numbers, as the 4th corps of their army, under General Bülow, had not joined; and I was not able to assist them as I wished, as I was attacked myself, and the troops, the cavalry in particular, which had a long distance to march, had not arrived.

“ We maintained our position also, and completely defeated and repulsed all the enemy’s attempts to get possession of it. The enemy repeatedly attacked us with a large body of infantry and cavalry, supported by a numerous and powerful artillery. He made several charges with the cavalry upon our infantry, but all were repulsed in the steadiest manner.

“ In this affair, H. R. H. the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Brunswick, and Lieut.-General Sir T. Picton, and Major-Generals Sir J. Kempt and Sir Denis Pack, who were engaged from the commencement of the enemy’s attack, highly distinguished themselves, as well as Lieut.-General C. Baron Alten, Major-General Sir C. Halkett, Lieut.-General Cooke, and Major-Generals Mait-

land and Byng, as they successively arrived. The troops of the 5th division, and those of the Brunswick corps, were long and severely engaged, and conducted themselves with the utmost gallantry. I must particularly mention the 28th, 42d, 79th, and 92d regiments, and the battalion of Hanoverians.

“Our loss was great, as your lordship will perceive by the enclosed return; and I have particularly to regret H. S. H. the Duke of Brunswick, who fell fighting gallantly at the head of his troops.

“Although Marshal Blücher had maintained his position at Sombref, he still found himself much weakened by the severity of the contest in which he had been engaged, and, as the 4th corps had not arrived, he determined to fall back and to concentrate his army upon Wavre; and he marched in the night after the action was over.

“This movement of the Marshal rendered necessary a corresponding one upon my part, and I retired from the farm of Quatre Bras upon Genappe, and thence upon Waterloo the next morning, the 17th, at 10 o'clock.

“The enemy made no effort to pursue Marshal Blücher. On the contrary, a patrol which I sent to Sombref in the morning found all quiet;

and the enemy's vedettes fell back as the patrol advanced. Neither did he attempt to molest our march to the rear, although made in the middle of the day, excepting by following, with a large body of cavalry brought from his right, the cavalry under the Earl of Uxbridge.

“This gave Lord Uxbridge an opportunity of charging them with the 1st Life Guards upon their *débouché*, from the village of Genappe, upon which occasion his lordship has declared himself to be well satisfied with that regiment.

“The position which I took up in front of Waterloo, crossed the high roads from Charleroi and Nivelles, and had its right thrown back to a ravine near Merke Braine, which was occupied, and its left extended to a height above the hamlet Ter la Haye, which was likewise occupied. In front of the right centre, and near the Nivelles road, we occupied the house and gardens of Hougoumont, which covered the return of that flank; and in front of the left centre we occupied the farm of La Haye Sainte. By our left we communicated with Marshal Prince Blücher at Wavre, through Ohain; and the Marshal had promised me that, in case we should be attacked, he would support me with one or more corps as might be necessary.

“The enemy collected his army, with the exception of the 3d corps, which had been sent to observe Marshal Blucher, on a range of heights in our front, in the course of the night of the 17th, and yesterday morning, and at about 10 o'clock he commenced a furious attack upon our post at Hougoumont. I had occupied that post with a detachment from General Byng's brigade of Guards, which was in position in its rear; and it was for some time under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Macdonell, and afterwards of Colonel Home; and I am happy to add, that it was maintained throughout the day with the utmost gallantry by these brave troops, notwithstanding the repeated efforts of large bodies of the enemy to obtain possession of it.

“This attack upon the right of our centre was accompanied by a very heavy cannonade upon our whole line, which was destined to support the repeated attacks of cavalry and infantry, occasionally mixed, but sometimes separate, which were made upon it. In one of these the enemy carried the farmhouse of La Haye Sainte, as the detachment of the light battalion of the German Legion which occupied it had expended all its ammunition, and the enemy occupied the only communication there was with them.

“The enemy repeatedly charged our infantry with his cavalry, but these attacks were uniformly unsuccessful, and they afforded opportunities to our cavalry to charge, in one of which Lord E. Somerset’s brigade, consisting of the Life Guards, the Royal Horse Guards, and 1st Dragoon Guards, highly distinguished themselves, as did that of Major-General Sir W. Ponsonby, having taken many prisoners and an eagle.

“These attacks were repeated till about 7 in the evening, when the enemy made a desperate effort with cavalry and infantry, supported by the fire of artillery, to force our left centre, near the farm of La Haye Sainte, which, after a severe contest, was defeated; and, having observed that the troops retired from this attack in great confusion, and that the march of General Bülow’s corps, by Frischermont, upon Planchenois and La Belle Alliance had begun to take effect, and as I could perceive the fire of his cannon, and as Marshal Prince Blücher had joined in person with a corps of his army to the left of our line by Ohain, I determined to attack the enemy, and immediately advanced the whole line of infantry, supported by the cavalry and artillery. The attack succeeded in every point;

the enemy was forced from his positions on the heights, and fled in the utmost confusion, leaving behind him, as far as I could judge, 150 pieces of cannon, with their ammunition, which fell into our hands.

“I continued the pursuit till long after dark, and then discontinued it, only on account of the fatigue of our troops, who had been engaged during 12 hours, and because I found myself on the same road with Marshal Blücher, who assured me of his intention to follow the enemy throughout the night. He has sent me word this morning that he has taken 60 pieces of cannon belonging to the Imperial Guard, and several carriages, baggage, &c., belonging to Buonaparte, in Genappe.

“I propose to move this morning upon Nivelles, and not to discontinue my operations.

“Your lordship will observe that such a desperate action could not be fought, and such advantages could not be gained, without great loss; and I am sorry to add that ours has been immense. In Lieut.-General Sir T. Picton, His Majesty has sustained the loss of an officer who has frequently distinguished himself in his service; and he fell gloriously leading his division to a charge with bayonets, by which one of

the most serious attacks made by the enemy on our position was repulsed. The Earl of Uxbridge, after having successfully got through this arduous day, received a wound by almost the last shot fired, which will, I am afraid, deprive His Majesty for some time of his services.

“H. R. H. the Prince of Orange distinguished himself by his gallantry and conduct, till he received a wound from a musket ball through the shoulder, which obliged him to quit the field.

“It gives me the greatest satisfaction to assure your lordship, that the army never, upon any occasion, conducted itself better. The division of Guards, under Lieut. General Cooke, who is severely wounded, Major General Maitland, and Major General Byng, set an example which was followed by all; and there is no officer nor description of troops that did not behave well.

“I must, however, particularly mention for His Royal Highness' approbation, Lieut.-General Sir H. Clinton, Major-General Adam, Lieut.-General C. Baron Alten (severely wounded), Major General Sir C. Halkett (severely wounded), Colonel Ompteda, Colonel Mitchell (commanding a brigade of the 4th division), Major-General Sir J. Kempt, and Sir D. Pack, Major-General Lambert, Major-General Lord E. Somerset,

Major-General Sir W. Ponsonby, Major-General Sir C. Grant, and Major-General Sir H. Vivian, Major-General Sir J. O. Vandeleur, and Major-General Count Dornberg.

“ I am also particularly indebted to General Lord Hill for his assistance and conduct upon this, as upon all former occasions.

“ The artillery and engineer departments were conducted much to my satisfaction by Colonel Sir G. Wood, and Colonel Smyth, and I had every reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the Adjutant General, Major-General Barnes, who was wounded, and of the Quarter-Master General, Colonel De Lancey, who was killed by a cannon shot in the middle of the action. This officer is a serious loss to His Majesty's service, and to me at this moment.

“ I was likewise much indebted to the assistance of Lieut.-Colonel Lord Fitzroy Somerset, who was severely wounded, and of the officers composing my personal staff, who have suffered severely in this action. Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Sir A. Gordon, who has died of his wounds, was a most promising officer, and is a serious loss to His Majesty's service.

“ General Krüse, of the Nassau service, likewise conducted himself much to my satisfaction,

as did General Trip, commanding the heavy brigade of cavalry, and General Vanhope, commanding a brigade of infantry in the service of the King of the Netherlands.

“General Pozzo di Borgo, General Baron Vincent, General Müffling, and General Alava, were in the field during the action, and rendered me every assistance in their power. Baron Vincent is wounded, but I hope not severely; and General Pozzo di Borgo received a contusion.

“I should not do justice to my own feelings, or to Marshal Blücher and the Prussian army, if I did not attribute the successful result of this arduous day to the cordial and timely assistance I received from them. The operation of General Bülow upon the enemy's flank was a most decisive one; and, even if I had not found myself in a situation to make the attack which produced the final result, it would have forced the enemy to retire if his attacks should have failed, and would have prevented him from taking advantage of them if they should unfortunately have succeeded.

“Since writing the above I have received a report that Major-General Sir W. Ponsonby is killed; and, in announcing this intelligence to your lordship, I have to add the expression of

my grief for the fate of an officer who had already rendered very brilliant and important services, and was an ornament to his profession.

“I send with this despatch 3 eagles, taken by the troops in this action, which Major Percy will have the honour of laying at the feet of His Royal Highness. I beg leave to recommend him to your lordship’s protection.

Letter shewing number of Prisoners taken.

BRUXELLES, 19th June 1815.

TO EARL BATHURST.

“I have to inform your lordship, in addition to my despatch of this morning, that we have already got here 5000 prisoners, taken in the action of yesterday, and that there are above 2000 more coming in to-morrow. There will probably be many more. Amongst the prisoners are the Comte de Lobau, who commanded the 6th corps, and General Cambrone, who commanded a division of the Guards. I propose to send the whole to England, by Ostend.”

*Letter recommending promotion to certain officers,
and a medal for the soldiers engaged in the
battle.*

ORVILLE, 28th June 1815.

TO H. R. H. THE DUKE OF YORK.

“I have had the honour of receiving your Royal Highness’ letter of the 23d instant, and I am highly flattered by your Royal Highness’ approbation, and gratified by your attention to this army.

“Your Royal Highness will see, from what happens every day, that our victory is decisive, and I hope we shall bring the concerns of this country to a satisfactory close without striking another blow.

“I will immediately recommend to your Royal Highness certain officers for the third class of the Order of the Bath. At the same time, I wish to suggest what follows for your Royal Highness’ consideration. We have now 240 orders, that is, of the first and second class of the Order of the Bath, for Admirals and General Officers; and, putting the navy out of the question, excepting to consider them as entitled to half of the number, the remainder will be for General Officers, or 120 orders for officers of that rank.

Now, I would ask your Royal Highness, whether there are now, or, considering the size of the British army, or the other calls there are upon that army for officers for other armies, it is possible that there can ever be in the British army 120 General Officers, so distinguished as to merit the first and second class of the Order of the Bath? We cannot expect again to have so long or so extensive a system of warfare as we have had for the last 22 years; yet even now, if Colonels and Lieut.-Colonels with 5 medals had not got the second class of the order, your Royal Highness would have found it difficult to fill your 90 vacancies of that class.

“That which I would propose is, that the second class, instead of being 180, should be reduced to 80; and the mode in which I would make the reduction should be by appointing only to the vacancies occasioned by the death or promotion of the original number of Admirals and General Officers.

“I would then give only the third class, not as third class, but as Knight's Companions. I would form another third class hereafter, to be composed of Colonels in the army, Post Captains in the navy, and Lieut.-Colonels in the army, of more than three years' standing; the two last

having already been Knight's Companions, and the Knight's Companions should be the fourth class. The new third class might be limited or not, as your Royal Highness might think proper. But I think the formation of it might be delayed till some future period.

"I confess that I do not concur in the limitation of the order to Field Officers. Many Captains in the army conduct themselves in a very meritorious manner, and deserve it; and I never could see the reason for excluding them either from the order or the medal.

"I would likewise beg leave to suggest to your Royal Highness the expediency of giving to the non-commissioned officers and soldiers engaged in the battle of Waterloo, a medal. I am convinced it would have the best effect in the army; and, if that battle should settle our concerns, they will well deserve it."

How the Battle was Fought.

GONESSE, 2d July 1815.

TO MARSHAL LORD BERESFORD, G.C.B.

"You will have heard of our battle of the

18th. Never did I see such a pounding match. Both were what the boxers call 'gluttons.' Napoleon did not manœuvre at all. He just moved forward in the old style, in columns, and was driven off in the old style. The only difference was, that he mixed cavalry with his infantry, and supported both with an enormous quantity of artillery.

"I had the infantry for some time in squares, and we had the French cavalry walking about us as if they had been our own. I never saw the British infantry behave so well."

The History of the Battle recommended not to be attempted.

PARIS, 8th August 1815.

To ———, Esq.,

"I have received your letter of the 2d, regarding the battle of Waterloo. The object which you propose to yourself is very difficult of attainment, and, if really attained, is not a little invidious. The history of a battle is not unlike the history of a ball. Some individuals

may recollect all the little events, of which the great result is the battle won or lost; but no individual can recollect the order in which, or the exact moment at which, they occurred, which makes all the difference as to their value or importance.

“Then the faults or the misbehaviour of some gave occasion for the distinction of others, and perhaps were the cause of material losses; and you cannot write a true history of a battle, without including the faults and misbehaviour of part at least of those engaged.

“Believe me, that every man you see in a military uniform is not a hero; and that, although in the account given of a general action, such as that of Waterloo, many instances of individual heroism must be passed over unrelated, it is better for the general interests to leave those parts of the story untold, than to tell the whole truth.

“If, however, you should still think it right to turn your attention to this subject, I am most ready to give you every assistance and information in my power.”

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